THE HEIGHTS OF CHRISTIAN UNITY

DOREMUS A. HAYES

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The Heights of Christian Unity

By
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To

LOUIS ALBERT BANKS

CHAMPION OF MANY REFORM MOVEMENTS

VICTOR ON MANY A BATTLEFIELD

38317

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FOREWORD

THEY told us that more than a thousand pilgrims climbed to the top of Fujiyama on the same day on which we made the ascent. We did not see them on our way. We saw only our own little company. There were many paths to the heights. Pilgrims started their journey on different sides of the mountain. There were forests dividing us at the beginning. Foothills hid us from each other's view. We were wholly unaware of the multitudes toiling toward the same goal with ourselves. We met them only when we had reached the heights.

There were many miles of distance between us at the bottom of the trails. As we climbed we were separated from each other by great and seemingly impassable ravines. As we neared the top we came nearer and nearer each other. The separating ravines grew smaller and smaller, and at last they disappeared. On the way up there was rain, with black clouds blotting out the heavens and a dense fog shrouding most of the earth. At the top there was sunshine. We all came together in the heights.

Could that experience be made a parable of our progress toward church unity and the sure outcome of our climbing toward the goal? We are endeavoring all of us together to attain the same height of unclouded communion with God in Christ. Our separate churches and sects live for the most part in utter ignorance of each other. Many think that there are vast ravines of difference between them and their brethren who are striving toward the same ideals with themselves. As we approach these ideals the separating streams become so tiny that we can step across them. The formidable ravines diminish and disappear. In the heights we come together. Our differing and partial views become one broad outlook upon the whole horizon. When nothing stands between us and God we find that nothing stands between us and our brothers.

It is an achievement which will test all our powers in the attainment; but at the top there will be the sunshine of God's approval and all our separations will be left behind and farther down. Jesus went up into a mountain to pray. As we follow our Master into the heights and as we unite with him in prayer, we will find ourselves one even as he and the Father are one. Church unity will be achieved there in the heights.

PART ONE: FUNDAMENTALS

CHAPTER I

THE PAULINE PRAYER FOR CHURCH UNITY

THE Epistle of Paul to the Ephesians is very generally supposed to have been written, not to the church at Ephesus or to any particular church, but to all the churches of Asia Minor. It is an encyclical letter, written to the general Church of Christ in Asia Minor and everywhere else in the world; and after Paul has presented the most mature conclusions of his theology in the first three chapters of our version he gives three chapters to practical exhortations concerning Christian conduct and life.

He begins this second division of his epistle by setting forth the basis upon which all the Christian churches were united in Christ and in the Spirit and in love, and he exhorts all Christians to maintain their fellowship in this bond of peace. He has many things to say later, but, first of all and seemingly in his thought most important of all, he would have all Christians give diligence to walk worthily in their Christian character, and in so doing to keep their unity in the Church of Christ in the bond of peace.

1. **The Text.** He says, "I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beseech you to walk

worthily of the calling wherewith ye were called, with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; giving diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. *There is* one body, and one Spirit, even as also ye were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all, and through all, and in all."[1] Here is the basis upon which Paul thinks all Christians are and always must be united in the church.

2. Love the Whole Life. He exhorts us to walk worthily of the calling wherewith we were called, with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love. Love is to be the secret of it all with us as with our Lord. Our whole walk and life is to be in love. It will be *μετὰ πάσης ταπεινοφροσύνης*, with all lowliness, for *ταπεινοφροσύνη*, lowliness, is love ready for service and sacrifice in behalf of the least of these, the brethren. It will be *μετὰ πραὐτητος*, with all meekness, for *πραὐτης*, meekness, is love controlling its temper and keeping sweet at all times. It will be *μετὰ μακροθυμίας*, with longsuffering, for *μακροθυμία*, longsuffering, is the love which is not provoked into unbalanced wrath or revenge under any stress or trial, returning good for evil unto

[1]Eph. 4. 1-6.

the end. It will all end in mutual forbearance, *ἀνεχόμενοι ἀλλήλων*, for forbearance is love in practical manifestation in the midst of provocations from Christian brethren as well as from those in the world.

3. **Love the Bond.** Love is the bond of peace. Love alone will be the sufficient guarantee of unity and peace in the church; and love alone will insure the peaceful conquest of the world. Therefore we are to give most earnest heed to the preservation of the unity of the spirit in love. *Εἰρήνης*, peace, is in the genitive case, and we are inclined to think that Origen and Bengel were right in calling it the objective genitive. It is love which binds human hearts together, and it is love which results in peace. One of the objects at which love aims is the maintenance of peace. Meyer, Ellicott, and Salmond call this genitive a genitive of identity or apposition, the bond which is itself peace. This identification of peace with the bond which joins the hearts of Christian brethren together seems to us like the substitution of the result of a thing for the thing itself.

If peace is the bond, then anything which disturbs the peace of the church will break the bond, for disturbed peace is broken peace; but if the bond is love, then the peace of the

church may be disturbed again and again by attacks from without or differences of opinion within, and as long as love is supreme the disturbed peace of the church will not break the bond which joins hearts together in the unity of the Spirit. Love abides when peace is gone. Love abides until peace returns. Love maintains peace as long as it can and assures the return of peace at the earliest possible moment, if peace for the time being has fled. In Col. 3. 14 we read that love is the bond of perfectness, and we believe that Paul means here to say that love is the bond of peace.

Peace is too frail a bond to insure the unity of the church in the Spirit. It is too easily shattered. It can be broken by another's hand, and if the unity of the Spirit were dependent upon the preservation of both external and internal peace, it would be at the mercy of any marauder who chose to create a disturbance at any time. Love is stronger than peace, and it belongs wholly to the realm of the Spirit. It need not be disturbed by any outward assault. It may triumph in despite of all provocation. Having loved its own, it may love them to the end, even as the Lord loved his disciples despite their many assaults upon his peace of mind. Love is the bond of Christian unity. It is the manifestation of the oneness

of spirit which proves the presence and dominance of the Holy Spirit of God. Love binds all spirits into one. This unity of the spirit results in peace. Peace in the unity of the spirit in the bond of love is to be diligently preserved in the church, Paul says, for peace and unity and love are the marks of the true church and result from the unity of its origin and its organization.

4. **The Church and the Spirit.** The Christian Church is the child of Pentecost. It was born in the baptism of the Spirit on that day. The Spirit was its nursing mother from the first. The Spirit was to guide it into all its maturer development. Born of the Spirit, led by the Spirit, all its life was to be derived from the Spirit unto the end of its days. The Spirit was the life-giving, life-preserving, unifying principle in the Body of Christ upon the earth. That Body never can be divided under any circumstances, for where the Spirit is, it is, and the Spirit is one. The saints in the church may differ in character and knowledge and talents, but they always will be one in heart and in hope and in charity, because they are indissolubly bound together in the one Spirit of God. They have had only one test of unity from the beginning, and that was the possession of the Spirit. "If any man hath not the

Spirit of Christ, he is none of his."[2] "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God."[3]

What makes the human body an organism? Why do its various limbs co-operate? How are its many members made to work together to one end? Because they are governed by one will. Because they are controlled by one spirit. So the one Body of Christ has the one Spirit of Jesus. This Holy Spirit is its inspiration, energy, control and life. It is one man in Christ Jesus.

5. The Prayer of Jesus. Jesus prayed that the church might be one. "Holy Father, keep them in thy name which thou hast given me, that they may be one, even as we *are*. . . . Neither for these only do I pray, but for them also that believe on me through their word; that they may all be one. . . . And the glory which thou hast given me I have given unto them; that they may be one, even as we *are* one; I in them, and thou in me, that they may be perfected into one; that the world may know that thou didst send me, and lovedst them, even as thou lovedst me."[4] There can be no question as to the desire of the Master

[2] Rom. 8. 9.

[3] Rom. 8. 14.

[4] John 17. 11, 20-23.

for the Christian Church. *He prayed that the church might be one, even as he and the Father were one. He prayed that there might be a united Christendom for evermore.*

Jesus did not pray that the church might represent the unity of a family, in which all the brothers would be equals and all the members would be helpers each of the other. He did not pray for the unity of fraternity and co-operation, though that would be a high attainment indeed. His ideal was something higher and better than that. He prayed that the church might represent and realize the unity of the Godhead itself. What that great mystery may be we may not know altogether now; but we are sure of one thing, that the unity of the Godhead is a perfect and absolute unity of spirit. Jesus and the Father were one in spirit, whatever else their union may have involved; and Jesus prayed that the church might be one in spirit, even as he and the Father were of one spirit and love.

Jesus never will be satisfied with the church until this ideal is realized. If ninety-nine per cent of the flock is safely within one fold and one per cent is wandering and lost from its fellowship and sympathy and aid, his heart will grieve for it and his Spirit will strive with it and he will labor unceasingly until it

is brought in. If nine jewels are fixed in the crown of his reward, but one is missing from the perfect round, he will search for it persistently until he may be able to say, "Rejoice with me, for I have found that which was lost." The family of God is not complete if only one half of it enjoys all the Father's bounty in the Father's home in unity of spirit with him while the other half has broken away from that unity and is trying to fellowship with the swine and satisfy its hunger with the husks of selfish isolation. Jesus will be satisfied only with a church which is one fold with its many flocks, one crown of rejoicing with its many jewels, one family with the Father and the brothers united in spirit and love.

The angels sang at his birth,
"Glory to God in the highest,
And on earth peace among men in whom he is well pleased."[5]

Now as he faces his death Jesus prays that that proclamation of the heavenly host may be realized on the earth and that God may be glorified in heaven through the Christian Church, in the unity of the spirit one church even as he and the Father are one. That prayer voiced the climaxing desire for his own. It is his will

[5] Luke 2. 14.

that the church may be one, and *his will is regulative for those who claim to be his disciples. They too never can be satisfied as long as there is any disunion among them.* They will do all in their power to maintain the unity of the spirit in love. They will do all they can to restore that unity if at any time or in any way it has been broken. The will of the Master is their will in this matter. His ideal was complete unity in the church.

6. **The Early Church.** The early church understood that this was true, and the great leaders of that church labored diligently to preserve its unity everywhere. Ignatius voiced their common belief and desire when he wrote to the Philadelphians, "The Spirit proclaimed and said: Cherish union, shun divisions. . . . So then I so sought to do my own part, as a man perfectly fitted into unity: but where division is and wrath, there is no dwellingplace of God." Ignatius had learned that doctrine from Paul, as Paul had learned it from the Lord.

7. **Paul.** (1) At Antioch. The Jews and the Gentiles were living in peace and harmony in the Christian Church at Antioch, until certain persons came down from James and stirred up trouble, and Peter joined himself to them, and Barnabas followed after; and it

began to look as if there would be two hostile or, at least, mutually exclusive parties in the one Christian church in that city. Paul's spirit was stirred within him and he withstood Peter to his face until Peter yielded and the threatened danger of schism was averted for the time. Later Paul wrote to the Galatians and told them all about it and then proceeded to lay down the line of his own argument upon that occasion, and the conclusion of his own principles, "There can be neither Jew nor Greek, there can be neither bond nor free, there can be no male and female; for ye all are one in Christ Jesus."[6]

(2) In Corinth. Over in Corinth the unity of the church was threatened again by party spirit. Some said, "I am of Paul"; and others, "I am of Cephas"; and others, "I am of Apollos"; and still others, "I am of Christ." We judge from what we read in the First Epistle to the Corinthians that each of these parties was equally guilty with the others of cherishing the schismatic spirit. The Christ-ians were just as bad as the Paulinists or the Cephians or the Apollonians. These names of the great apostles and church leaders and of the Master himself were appropriated simply as party shibboleths, and under the cover of these names

[6] Gal. 3. 28.

the devilish spirit of division was creeping into the Christian Church.

Paul roused himself to meet this crisis and he wrote a great epistle in which he dealt with many things, but first of all and most elaborately with this schismatic spirit as the greatest danger threatening the church. "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ . . . that there be no divisions among you. . . . Is Christ divided? . . . I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, as unto babes in Christ. . . . For ye are yet carnal; for whereas there is among you jealousy and strife, are ye not carnal?"[7]

(3) Babyhood. *To Paul divisions and dissensions were signs of babyhood rather than of manhood in the Christian life.* To him schisms were proof of carnality rather than of spirituality in the Christian Church. To him a divided church suggested a divided Christ, which was unthinkable and horrible. He challenged the very beginnings of these things with that indictment of carnality, and that indictment holds to-day in a Christendom divided into Greek Orthodox and Roman Catholic and Anglican and Protestant camps, saying in turn, "We are of Peter and we hold the keys";

[7] 1 Cor. 1. 10, 13; 3. 1, 3.

or, "We are of Paul and we hold the sword"; or, "We have the original Greek eloquence and orthodox wisdom," or, "We have the apostolic succession coming straight down from Christ." Are we not carnal rather than spiritual as long as these things last? Have we advanced beyond the selfishness of babyhood as long as we insist upon these claims?

(4) Body. Later in the First Epistle to the Corinthians Paul elaborated for the first time the conception of the church as the Body of Christ, "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of the body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ. For in one Spirit were we all baptized into one body."[8] Again, in the Epistle to the Romans, he uses this figure, "So we who are many, are one body in Christ, and severally members one of another."[9] Again, in the Epistle to the Ephesians he insists that the church is "his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all,"[10] its several members being reconciled "in one body unto God through the cross."[11] Where did Paul get this suggestion of the church as the one Body of Christ,

[8] 1 Cor. 12. 12, 13.

[9] Rom. 12. 5.

[10] Eph. 1. 23.

[11] Eph. 2. 16.

or, as he says in the Epistle to the Corinthians, the one Christ himself? We think that in all probability he got it from Jesus, and possibly from the account he had received of the last discourse of Jesus with his disciples, just before Jesus prayed that his church might always be one.

8. Vine and Branches. In that discourse the Master said, "I am the vine, ye are the branches."[12] He did not say, "I am the root of the vine and ye are the branches springing up out of this root." He did not say, "I am the trunk of the vine and ye are the branches shooting forth out of this trunk." That was not the Master's figure. He said, "I am the whole of which you are the parts; I am the vine of which you are the branches." The unity of the church is the unity of the Christ. Can the Christ be divided? No more than he can the church be divided. He is the whole vine, of which the church is the branches.

The branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; and if a branch is separated from the vine, it is cast forth and withereth and is fit only for kindling a fire. Only that branch which abides in the vine bears fruit and maintains its life. Union with Christ alone guarantees continued vitality,

[12] John 15. 5.

and union with Christ means unity in Christ, the vine of which we are branches, of whose Body we are members. Only those who are in Christ are members of the Christian Church. All who are in Christ are members of the Christian Church. Only those who are not in Christ are members of the Christian Church. That is the teaching of Jesus and that is the doctrine of Paul.

9. Unity of the Church. The first paragraph in the fourth chapter of the Epistle to the Ephesians is the classic passage in which Paul sets forth his creed as to the unity of the church in the spirit. It has been called "the most remarkable utterance regarding the Universal Church to be found in the whole New Testament." All the doctrinal portion of the epistle in the first three chapters has been leading up to this climax. The pre-Christian antagonisms between Jew and Gentile have disappeared in Christ. He has abolished their enmity. He has broken down the middle wall of partition between them. He is our peace, having made both one.[13] Paul never contended for the right to organize Gentile churches, to exist alongside the Jewish churches and independently of them. His whole contention was that the Gentiles and Jews formed one church,

[13] Eph. 2. 11-22.

one body in Christ. All the spiritual blessings for which Paul praises God in the first chapter and the second chapter of the epistle are for all alike. All the blessings for which he prays in the first chapter and the third chapter are for Gentiles and Jews alike and have this one end in view that the one Church of Christ should worship the one God and Father of them all in the unity of the spirit.

(1) Based on the Unity of God. The unity of God demands unity among his worshipers. The Jews recited the Shema as fundamental in their faith, "Hear, O Israel, The Lord thy God is one Lord," and they recognized the fact that all men were his offspring. That doctrine of the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man was applied by Jesus and Paul to the church. The one Father from whom every family in heaven and earth is named has a right to expect fraternal relations and unity of spirit among his children. It was the plea made by Malachi there at the close of the Old Testament, "Have we not all one father? hath not one God created us? why do we deal treacherously every man against his brother?"[14] Treacherous dealing among sons of the same father or children in the same family ought to be an impossibility. It is the

[14] Mal. 2. 10.

appeal to racial unity and to family loyalty which both Malachi and Jesus and Paul have made, not to the Jewish race alone but to the human race and to the whole human family. The one God and Father of us all would have his children dwell in unity.

(2) Its Marvel. That was the marvel of the Pauline churches, an ideal so nearly realized that it seemed to the men of that generation that a new thing had come into the world. It is difficult for us to conceive to-day what a strange phenomenon the Christian Church presented in that ancient world. Masters and slaves sat side by side at the table of their common Lord as brethren beloved. Patrician ladies from the royal court and plebeian prostitutes from the public streets worshiped together as sisters saved. Roman freedmen, Greek philosophers, Jewish tradesmen, and Scythian barbarians met in the Christian assembly upon such a plane of equality as the world never had seen before that day, and such as the world never had deemed within the range of possibility. All nations forgetting their former feuds, all ranks forgetting their former dividing lines, all sinful characters forgetting their past and worshiping together in present unity of spirit and purpose and life: here was a marvel indeed!

The Christian Church was no national church. Its doors were opened wide to all the nations. The Jew within it remained a Jew, the Greek remained a Greek, the Scythian remained a Scythian, the Roman remained a Roman. The Christian tie came first and made them brethren. All other ties of nationality and race were subordinated to the religious bond which made them one in faith and life. All distinctions of birth, rank, office, and nationality were lost to sight in the unity of the spirit into which they entered. They continued with one accord in prayer and supplication together.[15] They were of one heart and of one soul.[16]

This was the mystery of the gospel of Christ which had been revealed to Paul and which he sets forth with such eloquence and conviction in this epistle. God loves all alike. His eternal purpose is a purpose of love for the race. Jesus is the great Reconciler of human history. The Christian Church is the unifying body among the many families of men. It was to be the one perfect fellowship, in which all the members would have one will and one heart and one life, and through it in the dispensation of the fullness of time the Father

[15] Acts 1. 14.

[16] Acts 4. 32.

would gather into one all things in Christ, both the things in heaven and the things on earth.

It was to the members of this Christian Church that Paul wrote: "As many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ. There can be neither Jew nor Greek, there can be neither bond nor free, there can be no male and female; for ye all are one in Christ Jesus."[17] "There cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, bondman, freeman; but Christ is all, and in all."[18] In the acceptance of this common loyalty to one Person, in fellowship and communion with one Lord, white and black, slave and free, Romans, Jews and Greeks, educated and uneducated, all the heterogeneous elements of that ancient world found themselves marvelously and almost incredibly united in one family. With representatives of all the old religions and with men of no professed religion before, the Christian converts formed one brotherhood and gave birth unconsciously to one corporate unity whose influence made itself felt through all the earth. They had common ideals and inspirations. In new social contacts and un-

[17] Gal. 3. 27, 28.
[18] Col. 3. 11.

der a new moral discipline they acknowledged a common allegiance and became as one man in Christ Jesus. *It was one of the marvels of world history. It was a miracle of divine grace.* Paul was anxious that the beginning now made in this marvelous work should be maintained with increasing power in all the lands, and so in this circular letter he exhorts: "Give diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. *There is* one body, and one Spirit, even as also ye were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all, and through all, and in all."[19]

The new churches realized this ideal. In the same congregation people of different nationalities and of different social strata sat side by side. There were the Jews, one of the chief points in whose religion had been their utter separation from all their neighbors in all religious services. There were the Greeks, all of whose traditions had led them to despise these narrow and exclusive Jews.

There were literary and artistic people worshiping with uncouth barbarians. Romans, Egyptians, Asiatics, people as far apart in mental and social and national outlook as mountains and seas and diverse training could

[19] Eph. 4. 3-6.

make them, believing the same truth and professing the same allegiance and living the same new and transformed life. It was a marvel in the eyes of all men. This unheard-of and incredible unity among men hitherto divided from each other by impassable barriers did as much as any other one thing to convince the world that a new power had appeared in the race, a power which might mean its final redemption.

The influences which united these apparent incompatibles in the beginning are sufficient to unite all men of all the various Christian churches into one body to-day. Let us look at them a little more closely now.

CHAPTER II

THE PAULINE PLATFORM OF CHURCH UNITY

1. **Seven Unities.** There are seven unities mentioned here: one body, Spirit, hope, Lord, faith, baptism, God. "There is one mystical body, animated by one Spirit, cheered by one Hope, saved by one Faith, ruled by one Lord, purified by one Baptism, loved by one Father."

2. **Trinity of Unities.** These seven unities resolve themselves into a trinity of unities, forming about the names of the Divine Trinity as they appear in the enumeration. The Spirit comes first, and he is joined, on the one hand, to the Body which he vitalizes and, on the other hand, with the hope which he insures. Then comes a second triad, the Lord and the Faith which unites him and the believer and the Baptism which is the seal of this union with the Lord in faith. The seventh unity in the list is the one God and Father of all, and he in turn is represented as sustaining a threefold relation to the universe. He is transcendent, omnipresent, and immanent.

> "All are but parts of one stupendous whole,
> Whose body nature is, and God the soul."

These lines of Pope express our Christian pantheism, not identifying God with things, but recognizing his presence in all things.

There is one Body, the church of the Spirit, the church of the great Hope. There is one Lord, the Lord of our faith, the Lord of our baptismal confession. There is one God, transcendent in glory, manifest in the Son, immanent in the Spirit.

3. **Climax.** Meyer and Salmond and Abbott and Martin call our attention to the climax in the thought as it advances from the church to Christ and from Christ to God. The church is the visible unity; the Christ is the mediating and actualizing unity; God the Father is the ultimate unity with whom the church and the Christ are to be one. The unity of the church is "set forth in an ascending scale. 1. The spiritual character of the church—one body, one Spirit, one hope. 2. The Source and manifestation of this unity—one Lord, one faith, one baptism. 3. The Divine Author of all in the threefold aspect of his absolute unity—above, through, and in all."

4. **Central Unity.** In this list of seven unities the Lord stands in the midst, and on either side three. He is the central unity. The church is at the one end of this ascending

scale and God is at the other; and these two extremes are united in Jesus. "There is one God, one mediator also between God and men, *himself* man, Christ Jesus."[1] God and man are united in him. All believers are united in him. Belief in him is all that is necessary to enter into this unity of the spirit of which Paul speaks. The Association for the Promotion of Christian Unity therefore rightly begins its statement of principles with the declaration, "The Association recognizes all Christians as members of the Body of Christ—Greek Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Anglican, Protestants, and all others who accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour."

Where Christ is, there is no division. Christ cannot be divided. When all men can say with Paul that Christ is all and in all to them, and that they no longer live but Christ lives in them, there will no longer be any question of division among them. They will be brethren, loving all who are followers of their Lord even as they love themselves. Their unity will rest not upon any formulation of doctrine or any long-established institution but upon the person of their common Master and Lord. "Other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus

[1] 1 Tim. 2. 5.

Christ."[2] The one essential loyalty is not loyalty to any set of opinions concerning Jesus which anybody at any time may have formulated into a creed, and it is not loyalty to any hierarchy which may profess to be his representative on earth; it is loyalty to himself alone.

John Wesley realized this fact when he wrote, "Would to God that all the party names, and unscriptural phrases and forms, which have divided the Christian world were forgot, and that we might all agree to sit down together, as humble, loving disciples, at the feet of our common Master, to hear his word, to imbibe his spirit, and to transcribe his life in our own!" William Chillingworth was dying in prison as a martyr to his faith when he said, "Take away this persecuting, burning, cursing, damning of men for not subscribing to the words of men, as the words of God; require of Christians only to believe in Christ and to call no man master but him only." The center of all unity will be found in him. The real unity of our worship will not be in how we go about it, not in the method of it, nor in what we say about it, not in the ritual or creed connected with it; all real unity will be in him who is worshiped. He

[2] 1 Cor. 3. 11.

is the central unity over all, through all, and in all.

5. **Definitions.** Shall we now define each of these terms in the list of seven unities mentioned by Paul, that we may see clearly in what the unity of the church consists and upon what it rests?

(1) The one Body is the universal church, visible and invisible, the holy catholic church of the so-called Apostolic Creed.

(2) The one Spirit is the Holy Spirit of God, the Spirit of the ascended Christ, the church's Divine Comforter and Guide until its final hope is realized and all its work is done.

(3) The one Hope Paul calls the hope of our calling. Κλήσεως, calling, is genitive of originating cause, as Meyer and Ellicott and Salmond agree. Our hope originates in and is caused by our calling; and that calling, as Paul so often tells us in this epistle, is the call to bring about the final Consummation in Christ; our hope is the hope of the ultimate reunion and final unity in him. It is all in him. He saves us from sin, from all its power and guilt. He restores us to our true dignity and makes us capable of continuous fellowship with God. In that fellowship with the Father we are to find the incentive and

the empowering to continuous fellowship with all the redeemed. God in Christ will reconcile all things unto himself and in so doing will reconcile them to each other.

(4) The one Lord is our Christ, acknowledged by all Christians, in whose worship all Christians share. No one party among them can claim exclusive right to the Christ. The setting up of any such claim would be sufficient proof that they were lacking in his humility.

(5) The one faith is the vital faith which unites the believer to his Lord. It is no creed, no single system of thought. It always will be impossible for all men honestly to unite in subscription to any one system of intellectual beliefs.

(6) The one baptism is the baptism of the Holy Spirit which created the Christian Church and which constitutes the individual a member of that church. John the Baptist baptized in water but he prophesied the coming of One who was mightier than he, who would baptize in the Holy Spirit. The essential Christian baptism does not consist of immersion or sprinkling or pouring or any particular form or ceremony. These forms do not make men Christians. The baptism with the Spirit brings a man into union with

Christ, and in the unity of the Spirit all Christians are bound together in love and peace. Quakers and members of the Salvation Army are just as truly Christians as those who have submitted to water baptism in any form.

The baptismal rite has been a prolific source of division in the Christian Church. The baptism of the Spirit has been the one bond of union between all Christian hearts from the beginning until now. Water baptism is an external ceremony and cannot be essential to an internal faith. The baptism of the Spirit is a vital necessity to the Christian life and the one unifying characteristic of all Christian men. The ceremony may be a symbol of the reality and a confession of the invisible; but symbols are only shells and shadows, and confessions are of no value at all without the previous possession of the experience confessed. Symbols may be omitted without fatal loss. Confessions are not necessary in the face of the evidence of a consistent Christian life. Since the differing forms of water baptism have caused so much trouble and so much division in the Christian Church through all its history, is it not time for Christendom to raise the question whether the one baptism of which Paul here speaks is not the one unifying baptism of the Holy

Spirit which alone can furnish a basis for the reunion of all the Christian forces in the world?

Then, the other sacrament of the Lord's Supper has been the cause of many schisms in the church. It was intended to be a symbol of fellowship, of union and communion with the Lord, and in the Lord with all the disciples of the Lord. Surely, Jesus never thought that the form of the ceremony or the theology connected with it would cause more division among Christian brethren than any other act of their worship. What was meant to be a bond of union has become a source of discord. Is it not time, therefore, in view of the record of the past centuries, for Christendom to raise the question whether we have not misunderstood our Lord's language and command in this connection? May he not have meant that all our eating and drinking ought to be sacramental, in remembrance of him and his spirit of service and love? May he not have meant that communion with him was not to be exceptional and occasional but continuous and belonging to all the ordinary experiences of our daily life?

The trouble is that we have sacrificed our bonds of union to divisive forms and ceremonies representing and symbolizing them.

The trouble has been that the churches have identified the thing in each case with certain forms of the thing or certain beliefs concerning the thing and have made these of greater importance than the thing itself. The communion is the important thing in the Lord's Supper. The possession of the Spirit is the important thing in our baptism. These unite all believers. When the rites which are their symbols begin to divide believers they defeat the very object for which they were given and they no longer represent the unifying spirit of Christ.

(7) The one God and Father of all is the central unity of the universe toward whom all created beings inevitably and incessantly must move. Here, then, is the platform on which the whole Church of Christ may and must unite. They must acknowledge one God and serve him in one Spirit, the spirit of our Lord. Such acknowledgment and such service will prove the possession of one Christian faith and one spiritual baptism and will eventuate in one Body and in one cherished and realized hope.

6. Christendom One. In these essentials the Church of Christ, the invisible church, the Holy Catholic Church, has been one in all its history. In these essentials the Church of

Christ is one to-day: The Greek Church, the Roman Catholic Church, the Protestant Church are united on this platform, stand together in these essential things. Christendom is one at heart, is one in spirit, and is one in fact to-day. The unity demanded by the apostle here and the unity demanded by the New Testament throughout has been realized essentially in the genuine Church of Christ from the beginning. It is realized essentially to-day. The harmony of Christianity is far more fundamental than any surface discords in it. Like the ocean it may seem to be tempest-tossed into diverse currents on top when there is unbroken peace in the depths. As the National Council of Congregational Churches in the United States said in 1923, "All men who are in Christ are one, and are members of the Holy Catholic Church, however wide and deep may be their apparent separation in race, nationality, or history, in rite or ceremonial or creed." Let us rejoice in that fact and never forget it, even while we deplore the unnecessary divisions of historic Christendom into rival if not hostile camps and into the almost ceaseless denominations and sects which have led our enemies to cry: "Where is your boasted unity in Christ? Has it not disappeared long ago?"

7. **Pentecostal Unity.** They taunt us by telling us that the Pentecostal church was a united church. In a sense that was true.

(1) What It Was. We read that they were all of one accord in one place when the Pentecostal baptism fell upon them.[3] We read that they were all of one heart and of one soul after that, continuing in the apostles' fellowship and doctrine.[4] What was that doctrine? It probably was not officially formulated at that time, and it probably was comparatively limited in content. The gist of it was that Jesus was the Messiah of whom the prophets had spoken and that through his life and death salvation had come to the race. All Christians believe that to-day. That Pentecostal unity of faith has not been broken. We read, further, that that church continued in the breaking of bread. The church has continued that custom or rite through all its history. There has been no breach of unity with the Pentecostal church at that point. We read, further, that that church continued in prayer.[5] The church still continues to pray. On these essentials of Pentecostal unity the church is one to-day.

[3] Acts 2. 1.
[4] Acts 4. 32.
[5] Acts 2. 42.

In the beginning there was unity of spirit and there was also a measure at least of community of goods in the Christian Church, and it may have seemed to many like the ideal church for which Jesus had prayed.

(2) What It Was Not. It was not long, however, before the community of goods was abandoned and it was not long before there were serious differences of opinion. That was inevitable, for, as John Wesley said: "It is certain, so long as we know but in part, that all men will not see all things alike. It is an unavoidable consequence of the present weakness and shortness of human understanding, that several men will be of several minds in religion as well as in common life. So it has been from the beginning of the world, and so it will be till the restitution of all things." Neither the Pentecostal church nor the apostolic church was of one mind in all things. We find no record of any such fact in the book of Acts or in the New Testament Epistles. We do find the record of disagreements there.

Paul and Barnabas had a sharp contention at one time. We read in the Epistle to the Galatians that Paul withstood Peter to the very face, and before the whole congregation accused him of disloyalty and hypocrisy, of

being wrong in opinion and wrong in life. From the Pauline Epistles and the book of Acts we gather that there were differences of opinion from the very beginning of the Christian Church, as to practical methods of procedure in the distribution of alms and as to the conditions upon which the Gentiles should be admitted to the Church of God and maintained in good standing there. There were pugnacious sectarians in Corinth. There were theological apostates in Galatia. There were quarreling women at Philippi. There were dangerous heretics in Colossæ. There were those who walked disorderly in Thessalonica. There were ambitious theosophists in Ephesus, against whom Timothy had to be put on his guard. The Pentecostal and apostolic churches everywhere were full of differences and of wrangling, and were far from being the ideal churches in oneness of mind that some people seem to think they were.

They differed in opinion as to fundamentals of doctrine and of procedure, and these differences arose even in the Pentecostal church, and among those who were devoted Christians, and among the very chief of them, the apostles themselves. Having called our attention to that fact John Wesley added: "Nor does it appear that the differences which

then began were ever entirely removed. We do not find that even those pillars in the temple of God, so long as they remained upon earth, were ever brought to think alike, to be of one mind, particularly with regard to the ceremonial law. It is therefore no way surprising that infinite varieties of opinion should now be found in the Christian Church."

Two things are to be noted concerning the Pentecostal Church. First, they maintained the unity of the Spirit with many differing opinions. Secondly, they never excommunicated anybody who was a disciple of Jesus because he did not think as the majority of them thought about anything, and they never unchurched him because he preferred some different method of procedure from that they chose to follow and they never disfellowshiped him for anything except immorality. As long as he was loyal to the Lord they recognized him as a brother. It was left to later times for differences of opinion and ritual and worship and government to cause schisms in the church. They came very near to schism sometimes but their unity in the Spirit prevented it.

8. **Paul, a Possible Schismatic.** When Paul had been thrust out by the Lord into the field of the nations, and churches of the Gentiles

had been formed with traditions and customs and philosophies of life differing widely from those of the Pentecostal brethren in Jerusalem, some of those brethren became most pestiferous disturbers of their peace everywhere. Some of them seemed to think that no one could be a Christian unless he were a Christian exactly after their sort. Paul knew better. He fought valiantly for the independent rights of his Gentile churches. He believed and he knew that they could be Christians without being Jewish Christians; and if the leaders among the Jews had not come to his opinion at the time of the Jerusalem Convention, we have no doubt whatever that Paul would have led a revolt and organized his churches in absolute independence of all Jewish authority.

Truth is of greater value than unity of organization. It cannot be sacrificed to avoid separation. Either inside or outside the church it must have liberty of propagation. The apostle of truth never can compromise on any matter of principle. He will go out and preach his revelation with all freedom of utterance rather than stay in and be silent in a cowardice that corrupts his soul. Paul would have deemed it a dire necessity to separate from Peter and James and John if they

had decided against the liberty of his Gentile churches. He would have deplored the fact that it was necessary, but he would not have hesitated to meet the emergency of the occasion. He would have become the first great schismatic with a clear conscience, but with a sad heart.

Then, after the schism had been made, he would have sat down and written a platform of unity for the Christian Church such as we find in the Epistle to the Ephesians, and he would have pointed out the fact that circumcision and the Mosaic law had nothing to do with it, and that even though the Jews had disowned the Gentiles and the Gentiles therefore had been compelled to organize independently, he still recognized all Christian Jews as belonging to the one Body of the Christian Church, with one faith, hope, baptism, Spirit, Lord, and God the Father with himself. Men can form separate organizations without precluding in any measure the unity of the Spirit represented by these things. John Wesley never broke his own connection with the mother church, and he never intended that the unity of the Spirit should be marred by the organization of his Methodist societies. It never was. Though they maintain separate and quite markedly

different organizations there is complete unity of spirit in all these things mentioned here by Paul in both the Anglican and the Wesleyan connections to-day.

It ought to be clear that the unity of the spirit does not necessitate unity of organization. The unity of the spirit has been maintained in the past and can be maintained in the future without organic unity.

9. Schismatics May Not Be Sinners. It ought to be equally clear that under certain circumstances schismatics are not sinners. The sin may be on the side of their oppressors. If any church organization has become corrupt or has in any way betrayed its Lord and then undertakes to discipline true believers and to excommunicate them from the fold, the schismatics thus set apart are not sinners but martyrs to the truth. When excommunicated from the visible church they take the invisible church with them. When condemned by the mother church they are comforted and sustained by the Master to whom they remain true. When the Bishop of Vasona said to Savonarola: "I separate thee from the church militant and triumphant," Savonarola cried in a loud voice, "From the church militant, not from the church triumphant, for that is not within thy power."

True believers, honest and earnest Christians, cannot be separated from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus their Lord. Their Lord goes with them, wherever they go. If they are cast out, he is cast out. No man and no organized company of men can come between them and him. They may be separated from some visible church but they still will be members of the church invisible, as long as they maintain their fellowship with the Master and are in love and charity with all who belong to him. Were the Wesleyans schismatics? Are Protestants schismatics? If so, the schismatics have furnished some of the most saintly lives the world has seen.

CHAPTER III

ORGANIC UNITY: PARTIAL OR COMPLETE?

1. Claims. (1) The Roman Catholic Position. The Roman Catholic Church refuses to accept the conclusions of the last chapter. A modern authority among them has said, "The unity which the church must have includes the unity of the faith, unity of worship, and unity of government." Another authority, writing his contribution to a symposium on the subject of church unity, in which all the churches were represented, declared, "The Catholic idea of unity is unity of doctrine and teaching; unity in government; unity in a central authority, directing, controlling, guiding, and leading all its subjects by concerted action to the attainment of one end. This is organic unity, the unity of the branches and the vine. This is social unity. This is church unity. This is historic unity."

Cardinal Gibbons wrote to Peter Ainslie: "I heartily join in the effort for Christian unity, for schism is a curse, whereas union is a blessing. But Jesus Christ has pointed out the only means by which this unity can be

brought about and maintained, namely, the recognition of Peter and his successors as the Head of the Church. Build upon this foundation and you will not erect a tower of Babel, nor build upon sand." A representative organ of the church has put the position of the church even more plainly than this: "The church apostolic, undivided, and universal stands alone among all other religious communities, with everything to bestow, nothing to receive; her call, whether to individuals or to communities, is a summons not to treat, but to surrender. She sits as judge in her own controversy. The only plea she admits is a *confiteor,* the only prayer she listens to a *miserere.*"

This is the position maintained in the Catholic Encyclopedia throughout. In the long article on "Ecclesiastical History" we find the following statements: "There is but one divine revelation given us by Christ, but one ecclesiastical tradition based on it; hence one church only can be the true one, *i. e.,* the church in which the aforesaid revelation is found in its entirety, and whose institutions have developed on the basis of this revelation and under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. To assume equality among the various forms of the Christian religion would be equivalent

to a denial of the divine origin and supernatural character of the church."

All these claims have been repeated very recently. A spokesman for the church has declared: "The only church in the world that even claims to be infallible is the Catholic Church. The only church in the world that has unity of doctrine is the Catholic Church. The only church in the world that as a corporate organization goes back to Christ is the Catholic Church. . . . Christ's church has several indelible marks of identification imprinted on it by Himself: unity, authority, universality. The only church in the world that has these attributes is the Catholic Church. She alone teaches always and everywhere the same truths; she alone is obeyed as the voice of God; she alone is not a local, national, or racial church, but embraces every nation, condition, and race of man, and exists as a living, unified body with an authoritative head. If these marks do not constitute her the church of Christ, it is because there is no church of Christ, and Christianity is but a myth."

How logical and how easy this seems! Historic unity has been preserved only in one church, and that the papal church. All others must come under the government of the

Pope to become members of the one and only church. Unity of organization is essential to church unity. "We have maintained the one continuous and genuine church organization. Therefore all of you who are outside of our organization do not belong to the church!" There is one slight difficulty involved in this assumption. There are rival claimants to the continuous and genuine and apostolic organization! The Greek Orthodox Church claims to be the original church and says that the Roman Catholic Church is a schismatic church. The High Church Anglicans have a different apostolic succession from that of either the Greek Orthodox or the Roman Catholic Church, and they claim that it is a superior one. No one outside the Roman Church would allow any of these arrogant claims to exclusive authority and privilege to be valid and true.

(2) The High Church Position. This assumption of a single adequate church organization, with the corresponding claim that one's own church represents the same, leads to some absurd positions. In a *Manual for Confirmation Candidates,* called *A Book for the Children of God,* several editions of which have appeared and have been circulated among the Highchurchmen of the Church of England we

find the following luminous assertions: "The Catholic Church is the home of the Holy Ghost. It is his only earthly home. He does not make his home in any dissenting sect. Sometimes people quarrel with the church, and break away from her, and make little sham churches of their own. We call these people dissenters, and their sham churches sects. The Holy Ghost does not abide—does not dwell—with them. He goes and visits them perhaps, but only as a stranger. Dissenters can never be quite sure when the Holy Spirit will come to them; or when he will stay away. But he is always in the church. Our Lord said, speaking to the apostles, 'He shall abide with you for ever.'"

The absurdity of these statements becomes all the more apparent when we remember that the Church of England is episcopal, and the Presbyterian Church in England is a dissenting church, but the Church of Scotland is a Presbyterian church while the Episcopal Church in Scotland is a dissenting church! The dissenters are made such by the exigencies of politics and national boundary lines and not at all by the presence or absence of the Holy Ghost.

The Greek Catholic Church believes itself to be a wholly orthodox and catholic church,

and it believes that the Roman Catholic Church is a dissenting and unorthodox and unauthoritative church. The Roman Catholic Church, in turn, believes that all the Protestant churches possess neither right faith, true jurisdiction, nor valid orders. They have not the right faith because they do not accept the Roman claims concerning the church, the sacraments and the ministry. They have not true jurisdiction, since they have broken their connection with the only body in which that true jurisdiction can lie. They have not valid orders, because their ministers have not been ordained by the only persons in the apostolic succession who have had authority to ordain. Pope Leo XIII published the bull "Apostolicæ Curæ," in which he declared that Anglican Orders were and always had been wholly invalid for these reasons. It may be a small consolation to some members of the Anglican communion to know that Professor Briggs said that Pope Pius X assured him in a private interview that this decision of his predecessor "could not be brought under the category of infallible decision."

The High Church party in the Anglican communion, having been unchurched in this summary fashion by the Pope, immediately turns upon the Nonconformist bodies and un-

churches them on exactly the same grounds. Its leaders claim for themselves all the things the Roman Catholics say they have no right to claim and then they decide that the Nonconformists have none of these things, just as the Greek Catholic Church has decided concerning the Roman Catholics and just as the Roman Catholics have decided concerning the Greek Catholics. There is an element of the ridiculous in the whole situation, but the Greek and Roman Catholics and the High-churchmen are very serious about it, and it seems expedient at least, if not necessary, to bear with them in this seriousness.

(3) The Protestant Position. On the other hand the Protestant and dissenting churches deny the necessity of any apostolic succession historically established, in order to validate ministerial rights or church organization. They say that the whole theory of apostolic succession is contrary to the spirit of the New Testament and without any New Testament authority. The nearest approach to any suggestion of it in early church history was in the election of Matthias as a successor to Judas, and that election seems to many to have been a mistake. As far as we know that mistake never was repeated and the apostles never elected a successor to

James the son of Zebedee when he was martyred or to any other of the apostles when they died. Paul never was episcopally ordained. Neither was James the Lord's brother when he became the head of the church of Jerusalem.

The commissioning Christ has chosen whom he would to do his work in the world through the centuries. Church history proves that he never has had his hands tied by any assumption of apostolic succession. Cæsar Borgia was in the avowed succession. John Knox and John Bunyan were not. Can anyone doubt upon which of these the Lord's favor rested? The nonepiscopal churches have agreed with John Wesley when he said: "I deny that the Romish bishops came down by uninterrupted succession from the apostles. I never could see it proved; and, I am persuaded, I never shall." It cannot be proved; and, if it could, we might feel warranted in impugning the Lord's wisdom and justice on the basis of the historic administration of it.

Over against this position that valid ordination is restricted to any particular succession of men the nonepiscopal churches agree that the authority of their clergy is not handed down from ecclesiastical superiors, but bestowed by the people who are all of

them priests and who simply set aside certain of their number for special service. The two views seem to be diametrically opposed to each other. How can it be possible to bring them together in one body? At present the most feasible plan may be that of mutual submission to the ceremonies which are deemed necessary for the recognition of orders. This is double ordination and a mutual and equal concession, but it seems possible that both sides might submit to it in the interests of harmony *without casting any suspicion upon the validity of their previous ordination.* Some individuals already have done this. All might follow their example in order to have universal peace.

The position of the Protestants from the very beginning has been that they separated from the Pope and the papal organization, and that that separation was not a separation from Christ and the Church of Christ. As Protestants they remained as much members of the Christian Church as any Roman Catholics ever have been. The Dissenting position always has been that no state church could claim any monopoly of the Holy Spirit and that the fruit of the Spirit was as manifest among their various denominations as in the parent organizations. Can the hierarchical

and the independent views ever be reconciled? Probably not. It might be possible, however, for the folks on either side to decide that the folks on the other side were Christians and possibly saints deluded and mistaken, and as Christians and saints they might be willing to include them as fellow members in the one united church of all the followers, all fallible alike, of our common Lord.

2. Desirable. Many Protestants as well as Highchurchmen, many Dissenters as well as Roman Catholics cherish the hope that organic unity may at last be realized in the Church of Christ. Will organic unity between Protestants and Roman Catholics ever be possible? The Roman Catholics claim to represent the largest and most efficient body of members and adherents in the Christian world at the present time, and they are not disposed to compromise, and they demand that the Protestants come back into their fold and acknowledge the supremacy of the Pope. Protestants never will be willing to do that.

At the same time if Protestants really desire that the Church of Christ may be one they may as well face the fact that the realization of their hope will depend on their willingness to include the Roman Catholic brethren in the organization of the one holy catholic

church. Until they are willing to do that, all their talk is idle talk and all their wishing will be in vain.

What will be the probable course of events leading up to this consummation? Of course no one can foretell. May it not be possible that the Protestants will unite among themselves and then form unions with the non-Roman Catholic Churches and then when the non-Roman forces of united Christendom far outnumber the Roman Catholic forces may not concessions be made on both sides and all Christians, Roman and non-Roman, unite under one head and in one organization?

Would it not be possible for the Roman Catholics in the organization to call this head of the church a Pope and to believe that he was infallible while the Protestant members of the organization called him Father or Moderator or President or Archbishop or anything they pleased and exercised all liberty of conscience in believing or not believing in his infallibility? That would be possible if all would be willing to agree that many men might be deluded and mistaken and still be brethren in Christ. The practical details of any such union organization lie in the far future, but we ought to face the ultimate issues involved in the very beginning of any effort toward it.

Do we believe that it was the will of our Master that his church should be one in visible unity as well as in unity of Spirit? Do we believe that the large majority of the schisms in the church have been sinful schisms, and that it would have been better for the church and the world if the organic unity of the church had been maintained through the centuries? Do we believe that the one Church of Christ could have been reformed and purified from within as well as from without, and that the united church would have been indefinitely more efficient than the divided church has been? Do we believe that the heart of our Master and that the hearts of all his true disciples never will be satisfied with a merely invisible unity of the church? Do we believe that the world never will be convinced of our unity until that unity has an outward manifestation, a material body, an organic form? Do we believe that Newman Smyth was right when he said, "So long as noncommunion between churches is visible, real unity is invisible. And belief in the oneness of the invisible church does not atone for the sinful estate of visible disunity"?

Abel Stevens once wrote: "The biblical church of the future will have no sects, but

will be as the apostolic church in its oneness of organization." It is a beautiful vision, that of one visible Church of Christ in all the world, and many sincerely devout souls in all the many present divisions of the church long for its realization and pray for it with faith and expectation. Shall their faith be always disappointed? Will their prayers never avail? The more fully we believe in our present unity in the spirit in all the fundamentals mentioned by Paul in his sevenfold list of the particulars in which all Christians are one, the more foolish and the more wicked will the schisms which separate us seem. The more we are convinced of the essential brotherhood of all believers in the spiritual unity set forth in the New Testament, the less likely we are to be satisfied with the present divisions of the church which make it so difficult and next to impossible to realize that brotherhood in practice and in common endeavor.

There have been irenic spirits who have grieved over the divisions in Christendom through all the centuries, and they have labored and sacrificed and some of them have died in the endeavor to heal the schisms in the Church of Christ. Josaphat was martyred in 1623 and has been sainted in the Roman

Catholic Church as the great Apostle of Unity and the most famous Bishop of the Slavs. At the time of the Reformation Erasmus favored reform as truly as did Martin Luther, but he desired that the reform be made within the church by spiritual means. Wicelius, the moderate Catholic, said, "We will listen to Erasmus, to those who love Christianity better than they love a faction."

Staupitz, Luther's teacher, was of the same mind: and many others on both sides of the conflict in those days preached peace in season and out of season against the rising spirit of revolt. Melanchthon, Sir Thomas More, Bucer, Calixtus, Cassander, Bossuet, Grotius, Spinola, Molanus, Leibnitz, Schaff, Briggs, Gardiner, Ainslie, Lunn, and others have striven to restore the broken unity of the Church of Christ; and increasing multitudes in the Church of to-day agree with the bishops of the Protestant Episcopal Church "that the time has come for all the separated groups of Christians to agree in forgetting the things which are behind and reaching out toward the goal of a reunited Catholic Church."

CHAPTER IV

DIVISIONS DEPLORABLE

MANY saintly souls feel that the divisions of Christendom have been as the rending of the seamless robe of Christ. It was so with the first great division between the East and the West. It was equally so in the great schism between Protestantism and Roman Catholicism. Surely, the ever-multiplying divisions of Protestantism are a notorious scandal to the cause of Christ. Now we have an Eastern Christianity and a Western Christianity, a Greek Christianity and a Latin Christianity, a German type and an English type and an American type; and whenever the representatives of these competing denominations come together to form an Association or a Union or decide upon a basis for united action they soon clash on the question of creeds and succeed only in bringing out into sharper emphasis their peculiar shibboleths and their mutual antagonisms.

1. **Rope of Sand.** Lyman Beecher was sure that the early controversies which divided Protestants into sects had put back the Reformation more than two centuries. *All divi-*

sions in the Christian forces tend to delay the final victory of the Christ in the world. Bishop Cox stated the plain truth when he said, "Millions who are practically one as to fundamental principles of Christian society are impotent to make their mighty energies felt because a persistent individualism resolves them into a rope of sand." This division of our forces means continuous weakness while in union there might be irresistible strength.

2. Guerilla Warfare. All Christendom is engaged now in a guerilla warfare. No real campaigning by the one great Church of Christ has as yet begun. Our separate companies get in each other's way. Several brigades try to do the same thing at the same time and in the same place, when one could do it all, and could do it better without interference from the rest. We are duplicating forces and efforts and always are clamoring for money to do work which does not really need to be done. We have no united generalship. It took the armies of the Allies in the Great War several years to realize the need of a unified command to insure their victory. One would think that twenty centuries of failure and disappointment in winning the world to the Christ would teach the divided

church the same lesson. Division has meant defeat. Union might mean almost immediate victory.

3. **Competition Unchristian.** Our divisions have led to unchristian competition and in this competition there has been inexcusable waste. All selfish rivalry between brethren has been disloyalty to Christ and all waste of our resources has been disloyalty to the world we are set to serve. A church with warring sects is no longer an example to the world of a church of uniting love. A house divided against itself cannot stand foursquare against all blasts of criticism from without. A church which endeavors to maintain unity in multiplicity and evolve order out of chaos and have united action without united command is foredoomed to distraction and disappointment and defeat. *A divided and distracted church never can unite a divided and distracted world.*

4. **Precludes Peace.** How can our warring churches preach peace to the peoples while they cannot maintain peace among their various denominations? How can they hope to reconcile sinners to God when they cannot even reconcile the saints among themselves? How can they ask labor and capital to submit to peaceful arbitration when they can find no

method to smooth out their own differences? How can they ask the nations to abolish war as long as they continue their fighting in their own ranks? If their forces were united and they presented a solid front, they might carry the world for temperance and purity and holy living and peace.

With great gratitude we remind ourselves of all beginnings of united effort in measures of co-operation in the missionary field and in federated church movements in the home fields and in social and economic organizations for various reforms, but we recognize that these are only beginnings and prophecies of the greater efficiency of a single command. What has been proved in the history of the state again and again will prove equally true in the history of the church.

5. Political Lesson. Look at distracted Italy before the days of Garibaldi and Cavour, with rival states in constant warfare and helpless in the face of invasion from without. Look at the German states before the days of Bismarck and William the First, each with the complicated cares of government and with none of the security and the stability of the later empire. Look at the thirteen struggling colonies before the days of George Washington and John Marshall, each one

carrying all the problems of a principality and duplicating the time and resources and energy later funded in the federal government. These are but suggestions in the political world of the state of affairs in the religious world with our multiplied sects. *The political common sense which drove the divided states into unity sometime surely ought to drive the divided church into unity, especially since all the arguments from common sense and common benefit can here be reenforced by all the persuasions of Christian love.*

6. **Schism, a Sin.** We ought not to be content to say that weakness of organization will mean defeat in our campaign, though that is certainly true. We ought not to plead for unity on the ground that those who sit in the seats of the scornful ridicule our inefficiency and make great sport of our incessant bickerings, though we are painfully aware of that fact. We are sure that those outside the churches find in our multiplicity of rival organizations one good reason for remaining where they are. We know also that our missionary work is hampered at home and abroad by our disunion and our divisions. These are all sufficient reasons for our coming together; but they are all subordinate and insignificant

reasons as compared with the one great reason for Christian union, namely, that *our division is a sin against the very ideal of the Christian life.* It is a contradiction of the Christian spirit. It is the negation of Christian fellowship. It gives the lie to our Christian profession and faith. Therefore we pray:

> "O Son of God, whose love so free
> For men did make thee man to be,
> United to our God in thee,
> May we be one."

7. The Practical Situation. (1) In the Small Town. If in a village of one thousand inhabitants there are five struggling churches, that usually means that they all have church buildings and employ church janitors and maintain heat and light and insurance and furnishings; and they all have preachers and they all are anxious to raise money and to get new members into their own organization, and in the endeavor to do that the chances are five to one that they will fall foul of each other and indulge in some bitterness of spirit and speech.

Even if they do not and their various memberships are about equal in number, it is likely that the small group of people in each church will be unable to make ends meet financially and they therefore will be com-

pelled in each case to call upon the general church for aid. If they do that, it means that five general secretaries of five mission boards are appealing to various larger churches and traveling throughout the connections to arouse sympathy for and get the funds needed in these five small and persistently surviving congregations. The honor of the denomination is at stake in keeping them alive, and the five missionary societies contribute heroically to that end.

It frequently happens that, even with the aid or subsidy provided from without, these little churches in a limited community are still unable to provide for their needs by the financial contributions of their own members, and the good women get up church suppers and organize church fairs and invite the outside sinners to come to their assistance and pay for more than they get in order to help the church along; and if all such methods fail to raise the needed amount, the church people sally forth with subscription papers and hold up every available citizen for any available sum. If five churches are doing these things in one village, the outsider assailed by them all frequently will find that it is a saving of money for him to join some one of them and so to get rid of the importu-

nities of the other four, or he may be more likely to decide that all the churches are simply money-begging institutions and he for one will have nothing more to do with any of them.

Desperate church officials are likely to countenance almost any method of filling an empty church treasury, and therefore it frequently happens that unwise and doubtful and even illicit, cheating or gambling, devices are resorted to, and the Christian name is disgraced and the heathen in the neighborhood rejoice and the church becomes a byword and a reproach instead of the illuminating and inspiring and spiritual influence it ought to be. It is not always so bad as that, but it always is bad enough when five weak and struggling churches are trying to keep their heads above water in a community which could decently support only one really efficient church and to whose spiritual needs one church, adequately equipped, could easily minister.

The poor preachers in such a community are likely to be poor in more senses than one. It is usually the case in the present administration of the churches that the larger the salary paid the better the man it can secure. Five small and insufficient salaries may mean that the preachers are inexperienced or poor-

ly prepared for their profession, either constitutionally ill adapted to its work or with insufficient training in the schools. People do not like to see them starve and so heroic efforts are made to raise enough money in each of the five churches to keep the souls and bodies together of both the preacher and his family, and so it comes to pass that a young miss in the high school in talking about her home town says, "There are no poor families in our town, except of course the preachers'." The five salaries combined might be sufficient to make one preacher and his family self-respecting members of the community and the equals of their neighbors in the comforts and conveniences of life.

The five churches in a community of one thousand have far more interests in common than five partners in any business enterprise are likely to have, yet the five business partners unite their capital and their experience and their enterprise into an efficient and commanding institution while the churches persist in carrying on their separate and mutually embarrassing operations; and the Master deplores the fact that the children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light. The business sense of the community sees clearly that the competing

denominations are wasting money in quintupling the equipment and expense necessary to meet all the community's religious needs, and that their continual appeal for contributions is in large measure for causes which do not justify themselves in community service. In unchristian competition they waste the resources which might be better spent by all.

We believe that five struggling churches of five rival sects in one small town needing no more than one small church to minister to all its spiritual necessities are probably a grief to the heart of the good God who would much prefer that his children would dwell together as brethren in denominational as well as spiritual unity. We have read of the visitor in such a town who asked a member of one of the churches, "How is your church getting on?" and the reply was, "Not very well, but, thank the Lord, the others are not doing any better." Rejoicing in each other's failure and jealous of each other's success, the five poor and dying churches impress the community with the fact that whatever Jesus may have taught about brotherhood and love has been forgotten by his followers and that the religion of to-day fosters bitterness and envy and hate instead of kindliness and helpfulness and mutual affection.

(2) In the Prayer Meeting. Let us look into the prayer-meeting service in one of these churches and we will find a very small group of people in a room which seems unnecessarily large and dim lighted and dismal and the discouraged pastor announces several hymns which are sung so feebly that they lose all their intended inspiration, and there are a few prayers for the same old things and with the same old phrases which have been heard in that service for years, and the preacher makes a few remarks to fill in the remaining time, and everybody goes home with a feeling of duty done for another week and of some fellowship with the suffering saints who help to keep the church going, even though it be at this poor, dying rate.

The young people seldom are seen in such a service. A single strange face makes quite a sensation. The preacher considers it a task and a burden to be gotten through with once a week, and he heaves a sigh of relief when it is over. The faithful few who attend seem to have formed the habit and find it hard to break off. Their consciences would trouble them if they stayed away. They never look forward to it with any eagerness and they never expect much of anything from it. They would be surprised above measure if anything

ever happened in the meeting and anybody ever had any mental or psychical or spiritual transfiguration or apocalypse. They go just because they have been accustomed to going. They go just to keep things going. The prayer meeting has been dead for many years, but they still go through the motions.

(3) In the Parsonage. Let us look at the man in the parsonage of one of these little churches. He is expected to preach twice on Sundays and to conduct funeral services in addition. He leads the prayer meeting of course, and he probably leads the young people's meeting and teaches the adult class in the Sunday school. He superintends the church finances and looks after the church repairs. He gives chalk talks and lectures and makes open-air holiday addresses. He is expected to call indefatigably on the sick and the poor and all the members of his flock. His more favored brother in the large city church has many lay helpers and some salaried assistants who do most of the detail and drudgery work and so leave him time to devote himself to preparation for the pulpit, but the man in the little town charge does everything himself and is paid only a starvation wage for doing it. No wonder he feels like shirking, if he is lazy, and the multiplicity of his

duties overwhelms him. No man is capable of doing all these things well; and if he is conscientious and tries to do everything that is demanded of him, it is small wonder if in his youth he breaks down nervously and is a wreck for the rest of his life.

One school serves the entire community, and it has good management and good instruction, because the united community can afford it. One church could serve the entire community, and it could command good preaching and good pastoral service and good social work and one good prayer meeting because the whole community would be in it. *Why should there be visible unity in secular education during the week and visible disunity and supposable dissension in religious education on Sunday? Does the school unite men and the church divide them?* Can the people get together in reform movements and in labor unions and in matters of commerce and finance but must they separate into many little sects or cliques as soon as they begin to be religious? Religion ought to bind people together. It is not religion but something else which drives them apart.

CHAPTER V

SCHISM A SIN

ROBERT HALL was right when he said, "Nothing more abhorrent to the principles and maxims of the sacred oracles can be conceived than the idea of a plurality of true churches, neither in actual communion with each other, nor in the capacity for such communion. Though this rending of the seamless coat of our Saviour, this schism in the members of his mystical body, is by far the greatest calamity which has befallen the Christian interest, and one of the most fatal effects of the great apostasy foretold by the sacred penman, we have been so long familiarized to it as to be scarcely sensible to its enormity; nor does it excite suspicion or concern in any degree proportioned to what would be felt by one who had contemplated the church in the first ages.

"Christian societies regarding each other with the jealousies of rival empires, each trying to raise itself on the ruin of all the others, making extravagant boasts of superior purity, generally in exact proportion to their departures from it, and scarcely deigning to

acknowledge the possibility of obtaining salvation out of their pale, is the odious and disgusting spectacle which modern Christendom presents. The evils which result from this state of division are incalculable. It supplies infidels with their most plausible topics of invective; it hardens the conscience of the irreligious; it weakens the hands of the good, impedes the efficiency of prayer, and is probably the principal obstruction to that ample effusion of the Spirit which is essential to the renovation of the world."

1. Proof of Spiritual Lapse. Some of our divisions into sects represent the personal ambitions of individuals, and some arose through undue emphasis upon some minor doctrine of the faith, and some through mere differences of opinion as to the best methods of administration, and the majority of them stand as monuments to a great lapse in spiritual life. (1) It was after the conversion of Constantine and the consequent lowering of the standard of Christian behavior that the first schisms in the church, those of the fourth and fifth centuries, took place. (2) The church had descended to a depth of ignorance and immorality in the tenth century which marked its wide difference from the purity and the unity of the primitive times when the great schism

between the East and the West occurred. Ambition set up rival spiritual empires, and bitterness and hatred replaced the charity and peace of the earlier days. (3) The abuses in the church and the cesspool of corruption established in the papacy in Rome led to the revolt of the peoples in all the lands and the Lutheran Reformation was a reaction toward apostolic purity as well as apostolic doctrine.

The Reformation churches in turn compromised with the world and became spiritually cold and dead and spent more energy in fighting each other than in any crusade for the conquest of the heathen for Christ. They sought after worldly success more than individual and corporate holiness. (4) Methodism was another revolt from a worldly and unspiritual church, and as the Roman Catholic Church had turned Luther and his followers out of their communion the Established Church of England was glad to get rid of the enthusiastic followers of Wesley who were bent on spreading scriptural holiness through all the land. *The great schisms have taken place in times of spiritual decline, either by way of reaction toward better things or because of the hatreds and jealousies naturally engendered in that state.*

2. **Proof of Pharisaism.** Pharisees are sep-

aratists, actually as well as etymologically. Saints love each other and live together in peace. Selfishness separates; love unites. Dogmatism divides; humility and self-effacement make it possible for brethren both to abide each other and to abide with each other. Intolerance and superciliousness are incompatible with brotherly affection. For the most part it was sin which drove us asunder and the way to reunion is the way of repentance and faith. When the church becomes really Christian it will be one in spirit and in form. The Lambeth appeal to all Christians said rightly: "The causes of division lie deep in the past, and are by no means simple or wholly blameworthy. Yet none can doubt that self-will, ambition, and lack of charity among Christians have been principal factors in the mingled process, and that these, together with blindness to the sin of disunion, are still mainly responsible for the breaches of Christendom."

Alexander Campbell, the pioneer leader of the Church of the Disciples, was right when he said: "This plan of building our own tents and of confining all goodness and grace to our noble selves and to the elect few who are like us, is the quintessence of sublimated Pharisaism. . . . To lock ourselves up in the band-

box of our own little circle, to associate with a few units, tens or hundreds, as the pure church, as the elect, is real Protestant monkery—is evangelical Pharisaism."

3. **A Source of Weakness.** Some Christians try to believe that the many divisions into competing sects are justifiable, and some even assert that they are a source of strength, but the sad fact of the case is that the more the sects multiply the more powerless the church becomes to influence and convert the world. "United we stand and divided we fall," holds good of the church as well as of the state. It is not true that in separation there is strength and that the only hope of keeping the love of Christians for their Lord what it ought to be is in refusing their love and their fellowship to their brethren. As they repudiate them, they are likely to repudiate him.

The United States census of 1916 showed two hundred and two religious denominations in our land, and at the same time it showed that less than one half of our people were in any or all of our churches. London is filled with all kinds of churches, and yet we heard one of the religious leaders of England declare lately that not one in seven of the population of London ever darkened the door of any

church. We are in the minority here at home, and in the heathen lands we are outnumbered hundreds and thousands to one. In two thousand years of effort we have touched merely the fringe of the missionary problems around the globe. Our divided church has given us an unbelieving and a nonbelieving world.

4. **A Source of Shame.** History proves that our divisions are deplorable, not a source of strength but a source of shame. *It is a question whether our continued schisms are not our crowning crime.* It is a question whether any other evil in the church, in its disastrous results, can be compared with this supreme evil of dismembering the Body of Christ. Not even a bone of the body of Jesus was broken on the cross when he was in the hands of the brutal soldiers there, but in the hands of his disciples and friends the Body of Christ left to represent him on the earth has been hewn into pieces and the scattered members have refused to work together and recognize their need of each other and in isolated independence they each have tried to do the work that the whole Body was called to perform. The absurdity of it is equaled only by the tragedy of it. It is not to be excused; it is only to be repented and bewailed and denounced and abhorred.

Archbishop Leighton lived in the troubled days of dissension between the Covenanters and the Established Church in Scotland. He served as minister in both churches with great distinction. He passed from the one church into the other without losing his reputation for saintliness and the respect of all who knew him. He lived above the controversies of the time, in faithful adherence to eternal principles. He said, "The body of religion is torn and bleeding, its soul is dying, while we are fighting about the hem of its garment!" Such fighting is not Christian. It appeals to the narrow partisan but not to any broadminded lover of the entire church of God.

Some of our divisions are due to mere "crotchety, erratic, rampant irrelation and isolation which cannot work in harmony with others, which magnifies trifles out of all ratio to their real significance, puts personal ambition or personal grievances above the interests of the kingdom of God, keenly perceives little peculiarities of doctrine or discipline, and has no large grasp of great truths, no wide vision of mighty movements, and no sense of proportion." It cannot be denied that these things have been responsible for some at least of the divisions into needlessly multiplied groups and many of our smaller

denominations could "be eliminated by processes of absorption and combination, with very decided gain to the cause of Christ in the land."

All of our sects have not sprung into existence on adequate grounds. Does not their very number witness to the fact that they cannot represent essential differences but only minor disagreements and personal ambitions and private dissensions which never ought to have been allowed to disturb the peace of Christ's church?

The Protestant right of private judgment has been carried to excess. Individualism has run away with itself. We have been so independent that we have forgotten how dependent we are upon each other. The eye has said to the hand, "I have no need of you," and the head has said to the feet, "I have no need of you," and the church which is the Body of Christ, dismembered and mutilated, has been unable to function properly in the world. *The divided church has been a colossal failure instead of an all-conquering force among men.*

The Lambeth appeal said, with a pathetic humility in which all genuine Christians ought to be ready to join, "We acknowledge this condition of broken fellowship to be contrary to

God's will, and we desire frankly to confess our share in the guilt of thus crippling the Body of Christ and hindering the activity of his Spirit."

5. Cause of Failure. (1) In the Great War. The Great War demonstrated the impotence of the church so clearly that none could fail to see it. It was one of the most brutal wars in all history and yet it was waged, in large measure, by so-called Christian nations and the organized church in all the nations was helpless to make its voice heard in favor of peace. The Pope did what he could and spoke as the very Vicar of Christ on more than one occasion, but even his own church did not stand by him, and all the other churches were carried away into the maelstrom of wholesale murder and hate. The world had come into the churches and the way of the world is the way of war rather than of peace, and the divided church proved to be no unifying bond of brotherhood among the warring races and peoples. Catholic fought Catholic and Protestant fought Protestant. Patriotism was dominant and Christian brotherhood was subordinate. Mars was in control and the churches followed Mars instead of the Master, and if they protested at all, their protest was too weak to be of any effect.

The Second Interim Report of the Sub-Committee appointed by the Archbishops of Canterbury and York's Committee and by Representatives of the English Free Churches' Commissions, in connection with the proposed World Conference on Faith and Order said among other things: "It is the purpose of our Lord that believers in him should be one visible society, and this unity is essential to the purpose of Christ for his church and for its effective witness and work in the world. The conflict among Christian nations has brought home to us with a greater poignancy the disastrous results of the divisions which prevail among Christians, inasmuch as they have hindered that growth of mutual understanding which it should be the function of the church to foster, and because a church which is itself divided cannot speak effectively to a divided world."

The church did not count in that great struggle. It was a negligible quantity as far as the advocacy and the consummation of peace were concerned. The church was sent into this world by the Prince of Peace with a gospel of peace. Its God is not a God of confusion but of peace. It stands for harmony rather than discord, for peace rather than war, for fellowship and human brotherhood

and Christian love. All men knew what the church ought to have represented in that struggle. All men saw that it either tamely submitted to the jingoist propaganda or feebly failed to make its protest heard above the roar of cannon and the noise of conflict. The war proved that the church had not overcome the world, but, on the contrary, had been largely overcome by it. Materialism and rationalism and militarism were represented in the church membership almost as largely as in the rank and file of secular society.

(2) In World Evangelism. In two thousand years the divided church has failed to make a Christian nation anywhere on the face of the globe. Our national symbols are still lions and eagles, birds and beasts of prey. No nation as yet has been willing to adopt the Divine symbol of the Lamb, innocent, sacrificial, triumphant in the end. If there had been a really Christian nation at Versailles, ready to risk its all upon the spirit of Christ in its post-war policies, would it not have proved even now that Christianity is pre-eminently practical and pays in both time and eternity? Unfortunately, no such nation was there. There is no nation whose policies are confessedly and consistently Christian, and there is no nation the majority of whose citi-

zens are affiliated by their own desire with the Christian churches of that nation.

The churches are neither attracting nor controlling the multitudes. Many of them have become effeminate, churches of conventionality and comfort and compromise, churches of teas and clubs and frills and fads, with dilettante interest in social reforms rather than dynamos of spiritual power, reservoirs of regenerating influence in the community and the national life. We are told that the average gain in the individual churches is only three members a year, and that means, of course, that many of the churches are losing rather than gaining ground. Even in our Sunday schools only fifteen per cent of their membership is saved to the church, and eighty-five per cent of the children and young people slip out of our hands.

That is the condition at home. How is it abroad? In India there is one Christian to three hundred worshipers of the idols. In China there is one Christian to three thousand worshipers of the idols. After twenty centuries of Christian effort a score of heathen are born into the world for every one who is born again and we are hopelessly swamped in the race for supremacy in the faiths of the

heathen lands. We never can have supremacy without harmony among ourselves. The task has proved too great for our divided and chaotic Christendom. We need a united church advancing in obedience to the Master's command in perfect fellowship of spirit and federation of effort before we can hope to overcome the forces of error and the powers of evil in this world.

(3) In Reform Movements. John D. Rockefeller, Jr., is reported to have said at one time:

"Some years ago I was appointed by the governor of the State of New York as chairman of a commission to investigate vice conditions in the city of New York. I had been brought up in and about New York, and I thought I knew that city very well; but when I came to investigate, and for seven months looked into the vice conditions, I did not believe it possible that such an unspeakable condition could actually exist in my city. I was simply appalled. But I learned this lesson, that whatever their interests were on other matters, on matters of vice, matters that touched their nefarious business, you could count on all the leaders and all the minions of vice moving absolutely as a unit for any protection they wanted or any legislation

they wanted; and on the other hand, I saw the moral and spiritual forces of New York city split into fragments, and divided into one hundred different denominations.

"I saw that on one great moral question united Protestantism had gotten together. The denominations had co-operated fairly well on the question of the abolition of the liquor traffic, and I saw that we had been able by that co-operation to write the Eighteenth Amendment into the Constitution. Then a vision came to me; that if on any great moral question, on the problem of the evangelization of our city, or the salvation of the world, we could unite the forces of Protestant Christianity as we have united them against the nefarious liquor traffic, we could conquer the world."

It is the judgment of a business man who has seen the success of united effort in one great reform and who has come to believe that success is possible in all reforms by the same method.

We needed no new sect to be formed to abolish the open saloon. All we needed was the uniting of the church forces in the effort, and the thing was done. We shall need no new sect to be formed to outlaw war. All we need is to Christianize our churches at

that point and then to unionize them in that effort, and the thing will be done. General Bliss of the United States army said very pointedly, "If we have another war, it will be the fault of the Christian Church," and he probably meant that a united church, united in opposition to the fiendish institution of war, could put an end to it. The individual denominations have not been able to do that, and if they do not unite in their effort to do it the responsibility for their continued failure and the consequent launching of the next great war with all its inconceivable horrors will lie at their doors.

In view of the present situation one can almost sympathize with the despairing declaration of Sir Charles Wakefield when Lord Mayor of London, "The waste of effort at the present time is appalling. The lack of cohesion amounts almost to paralysis. It is certain that the hour is fast approaching when the church will have to decide between unity and decadence."

(4) In All Good Work. Shall doctrinal differences be allowed to hinder the great Church of Christ from united effort for the accomplishment of its great ends? We can think differently about a great many things and still unite in smiting great evils and insti-

tuting great reforms. If a united church can do these things—and our divided churches always have been unable to do them—then does not the Master plead with us all to get together, that this work may be done? Our continued inefficiency becomes a crime. Roosevelt wrote to the Edinburgh Conference concerning their projects: "I believe that unity in a spirit of Christian brotherhood, for such broad Christian work, will tend, not to do away with differences of doctrine, but to prevent us from laying too much stress on the differences of doctrine. . . . If only we can make up our minds to work together with earnest sincerity for the common good, we shall find that doctrinal differences in no way interfere with our doing this work."

Of course that is true. One man may believe that he was predestined to be saved from the very foundation of the world and another man may believe that he never would have been saved in this world or the next if he had not sincerely repented and exercised personal faith, and they both may agree that child labor ought to be abolished and they may unite perfectly in their efforts to that end. One man may believe that immersion is the only valid baptism and another man may believe that the baptism of the Holy Spirit is the

only essential baptism and that any quantity of water applied to the body in immersion or sprinkling or pouring is a matter of indifference to a man's salvation, and they may both be Abolitionists and work together in absolute harmony in freeing the slaves. One man may believe in the apostolic succession and another man may believe that the apostolic succession is a figment of the imagination, untraceable in history and unprofitable in practice, and yet they may both agree that war is wrong and pray and work and vote as one against it. Doctrinal differences need not divide men in reform and missionary efforts, and *a united church can accomplish more along these lines in one century than our divided Christendom has been able to accomplish in twenty of them.*

CHAPTER VI

THE SCANDAL IN MISSIONARY EFFORTS

WHAT a scandal our divided efforts in evangelizing the heathen world have been!

1. **Japan.** It was small wonder that, according to apparently reliable account, the commission sent out by the Japanese government to go around the world and find the best religion for the newly awakened Japanese nation to adopt came back and reported unfavorably as far as the Christian religion was concerned, because while it seemed to produce the finest types of individual character it seemed to them at the same time to have in it an inherently divisive tendency which led it to split up into many competing sects and therefore made it inadvisable for a young and growing nation, seeking a unifying principle in its religious faith, to adopt it. A united Christendom could have seen its faith officially adopted by that nation in a single day; even as a united Christendom could have conquered all the nations by the sheer impact of its numbers and the mere contact with its enthusiasm and consecration.

2. **The Individual Convert.** As it is now we make a convert in the mission field and we begin to instruct him in the fundamentals of the Christian faith and in the elements of church history, and we come to the divisions of the churches, and when he asks which of these many divisions is right we can tell him only that we ourselves are nearest right in all things and all the rest are wrong in a few or in many particulars. The others all say the same thing, and he is likely to fall into utter confusion among the many crossroads, whereas a united church could have offered him and all his fellows a straight road to travel.

We tell him that the Presbyterians are good people, but they hold some horrible doctrines unworthy of his acceptance and faith; and the Baptists are good people, but they are narrow and bigoted and insist upon certain forms of admission to their communion which do not seem to us at all necessary or right; and the Congregationalists are good people, but they have no official creed and their churches are not bound together with more than a rope of sand; and the Episcopalians are good people, but they are rather aristocratic and exclusive and have some queer notions about apostolic succession which seem to us perfectly absurd; and the Methodists are good peo-

ple and were all right in the beginning, but they have backslidden fearfully in these latter days and no longer represent the fervor of faith and purity of doctrine they once had; and the Tongues people are good people, but fanatical and not safe guides in the interpretation of Scripture; and the Roman Catholics are some of them very good people, but they allow you no liberty of conscience and demand obedience to the priest and the Pope; and, in fact, the only people who represent the original truth of the gospel and the primitive simplicity of the faith is our own little group, small in numbers now but growing, and he ought to rejoice that he has been converted in our meetings and escaped all the errors and dangers these other Christian bodies represent.

If he is a docile convert, he may take our word for it and ask no more questions. If he has an inquiring mind, he may not be satisfied so easily and he may go around and ask some of these other people what they think about us, and he may find out that there is something wrong with us as well as with them, and he may decide that where there is so much division there can be neither unifying spirit nor truth. Who can blame him if he does?

3. **The World Traveler.** A cultured native from India makes a journey to the west, and in Mesopotamia he finds resident bishops of five different communities in one city, and in Russia he finds one Christian church and in Italy another and in England a third, and all of them claiming to be apostolic in their succession, and he takes a walk through London and he finds a great cathedral of the Anglican Church and an almost equally great cathedral of the Irvingite Church and a Baptist Tabernacle and a Presbyterian chapel and a Wesleyan mission and a Quaker meetinghouse and a Salvation Army hall, and he goes on to America and he finds in one city that one hundred and fifty denominations have a home, and these denominations are not only distinct from each other but they have divisions among themselves, so that a man can be six kinds of an Adventist in turn, if he choose, and twelve kinds of a Presbyterian, and thirteen kinds of a Baptist, and sixteen kinds of a Lutheran, and seventeen kinds of a Methodist; and his brain begins to whirl and he concludes that if any one of these is right all the others must be wrong, and he despairs of ever being able to decide which is right and which is wrong.

Then he goes back to India saying: "Christendom is a crazy quilt and the seamless robe

of Christ was torn into fragments long ago. If the Christian Church is the bride of Christ, then Christ is a polygamist worse than any Mormon bishop ever was, for there are many churches claiming to be the bride of Christ and while some are willing to recognize the other brides, others claim to be the favorite and exclusive bride, and there is far from being peace and domestic harmony in the household of the faith. Christendom is filled with sects and some of them are so small that they almost deserve to be called insects. They are not eagles, or even sparrows; they are hardly pee-wits or tom-tits." Who can blame him if he hesitates to accept as the eternal and satisfying truth the gospel presented by any one of these one hundred and fifty rival claimants for his allegiance and support?

4. **Absurd Names.** Why should we ask a Chinaman to join the Dutch Reformed Church in America denomination? Why should we ask him to trust his eternal interests to the Old Two-seed-in-the-Spirit Predestination Baptist sect? Why should we ask him to choose between the Methodist Episcopal Church, North, and the Methodist Episcopal Church, South? Why should we ask him to determine his preference between the Greek Catholic and the Roman Catholic Church?

These very names suggest historical and geographical distinctions which are of absolutely no interest or value to him. The missionary appeal would be a hundred or a thousandfold more effective if the one church of all Christendom could say: "We are one body in Christ. We are of one spirit in the Lord. We invite you to come into the one Church of the Christ."

The missionaries themselves are seeing how ridiculous it is to reproduce in their fields the petty and perplexing divisions of the home forces, and they are asking for one Christian Church instead of many, in order that a united Christendom may cope successfully with the heathenisms surrounding them in all the lands.

5. South India. Ministers of the Anglican Church, the Congregational Church, the Church of Scotland, the United Free Church of Scotland, and the Dutch Reformed Church of America met together in a conference on church union in South India and they said: "We believe that the challenge of the present hour in the period of reconstruction after the war, in the gathering together of the nations, and the present critical situation in India itself, call us to mourn our past divisions and turn to our Lord Jesus Christ to seek in him

the unity of the body expressed in one visible church. We face together the titanic task of winning India for Christ, one fifth of the human race. Yet confronted by such an overwhelming responsibility, we find ourselves rendered weak and comparatively impotent by our unhappy divisions—divisions for which we were not responsible, and which have been imposed upon us from without—divisions which we did not create, and which we do not desire to perpetuate." Then they pleaded for a union of all the Christian forces to make some adequate attack upon their task.

The Methodist Episcopal Church and the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and the Canadian Methodist Church united to form one Methodist Church in Japan. The Presbyterians of the North and the South in the United States are divided at home but they are united in every mission field. Seven different Presbyterian and Reformed bodies have united to form one church in Japan. The Presbyterian and the Reformed Churches in China are united and the Congregationalists are joining with them. The Centenary Conference in Shanghai prepared a remarkable manifesto, which may be the forerunner of a united Christian Church in China.

6. **Shanghai Conference.** It said: "This Con-

ference unanimously holds the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the supreme standard of faith and practice and holds firmly the primitive apostolic faith. Further, while acknowledging the Apostles' Creed and the Nicene Creed as substantially expressing the fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith, the Conference does not adopt any creed as a basis of church unity, and leaves confessional questions for further consideration; yet, in view of our knowledge of each other's doctrinal symbols, history, work, and character, we gladly recognize ourselves as already one body in Christ, teaching one way of eternal life, and calling men into one holy fellowship; and as one in regard to the great body of doctrine of the Christian faith; one in our teaching as to the love of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost; in our testimony as to sin and salvation, and our homage to the Divine and Holy Redeemer of men; one in our call to the purity of the Christian life, and in our witness to the splendors of the Christian hope. We frankly recognize that we differ as to methods of administration and church government. But we unite in holding that these differences do not invalidate the assertion of our real unity in our common witness to the

gospel of the grace of God." Then came the logical conclusion, "that in planting the Church of Christ on Chinese soil, we desire to plant only one church under the sole control of the Lord Jesus Christ, governed by the Word of the living God and led by his guiding Spirit." Any church governed by the Word of God and guided by his Spirit will be a united church. The missionary church may come to be a more Christian church in its organic unity than any one of the divided churches at home can claim to be.

7. **Co-operation.** There has been a measure of co-operation in missionary work for many years, in the translation of the Scriptures, the publishing and the distribution of Christian literature, the founding and managing of schools and colleges and hospitals, in negotiations with governments, in making surveys and collecting facts, in common effort for religious liberty and common endeavor to abate or abolish the sale of opium and other narcotic drugs. These things are all good, but they do not satisfy the demands of the mission field. Co-operation in international councils must lead on to organic unity of spirit and life.

8. **Organic Unity.** Organic union is good and desirable, but organic unity is better and

the ideal. There is a real difference between them. It has been well said that "unity means oneness; union is the binding together of things that are not one. . . . Union is outward, accidental, and circumstantial. Unity is inward and essential. Union is mechanical; it is put together. Unity is vital; it is the oneness of a common life where the parts grow together. The endeavor after Christian union may achieve alliances and federations and still perpetuate actual separation."

Church federations are in a measure organic unions but they are only way-stations on the road to the realization of the Master's ideal in the organic unity of the Christian Church. That goal may be reached in the mission field before it is reached among the churches at home. The denominational efforts at cosmopolitanism may react at length in reunion at the home base and the unity first realized in individual mission fields may become a catholicism covering the earth. There are beginnings of a tidal wave in this direction which may sweep over the nations. We welcome every movement which looks toward the glad day when all the churches will be one Church in the Lord.

CHAPTER VII

THE TURNING OF THE TIDE

THERE is an evident movement of the Spirit of God among our divided churches, looking toward reunion among the more closely related denominational branches as well as among the larger bodies. We rejoice in every indication that the Master's prayer for unity and peace among brethren is at last to be fulfilled.

1. **Methodist.** In 1884 six Methodist bodies united to form one Methodist Church in Canada, and so prepared for their share in The United Church of Canada to-day. There is a united Methodist Church in Japan, formed by the union of three separate Methodist bodies. There is a united Methodist Church in New Zealand and a united Methodist Church in Ireland. There is an active effort to unite the Methodist churches in England, and that happy consummation is already within view.

The two great Methodisms of the United States have been trying to get together and another generation probably will see the effort made successful. The two churches, the Meth-

odist Episcopal Church and the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, never should have been separated. They have been one Methodist Church in doctrine and in polity, in common tradition and prevalent experience through all their history.

Bishop Foster's father lived and died a member of both churches, maintaining his name on the membership list of a congregation in each church and contributing an equal amount to the running expenses of each. His son, Bishop Randolph S. Foster, wrote a powerful plea for The Union of Episcopal Methodisms in a book with that title; and if all Methodists had had the far-seeing vision and the peace-loving disposition of that father and son, Methodism in America never would have been divided; and, if divided, they would have been reunited in a single generation. Political and sectional issues never should separate brethren in Christ, and surely merely minor differences never should have this result.

One Methodist authority declares that the divisions of Wesleyan Methodism have had less justification in reason than any other to be found in the history of Christ's church; since not one of them represents a protest against doctrinal error or a struggle for spiritual freedom; and he goes on to say that the dif-

ferences between Wesleyan Methodists, Primitive Methodists, Bible Christians, and United Free Methodists are so microscopic that an outsider has great difficulty in finding them. Surely, the time is at hand when such microscopic differences no longer will be allowed to divide the church.

2. **Lutheran.** Five groups of Norwegian Lutherans have united to form the Norwegian Lutheran Church in America, and the three largest Lutheran bodies in the United States have given up their separate identities and their separate names to form the United Lutheran Church in America. Certain synods in Ohio have united one million Lutherans and they are now negotiating for union with one million more.

3. **Presbyterian.** The Presbyterian and Reformed Churches have united their forces in Japan and Korea and China and India and Mexico and Brazil. The Presbyterian Church in the United States has received into its Assembly the Cumberland Presbyterian Church and the Welsh Calvinistic Methodist Church and it is negotiating now with the Reformed Church and the United Presbyterian Church and a tentative plan of organic union already has been approved. The Presbyterian churches of Scotland have united.

4. **Other Unions.** The Baptists and the Free Baptists in the United States have come together. The Methodists and the Presbyterians and the Congregationalists of Canada have formed one church. In India corporate union is proposed between the Anglican Church, the Mar Thoma Syrian Christians, and the South India United Church, which includes Presbyterians and Congregationalists of both the English and the American missions, and the missions of the Church of Scotland, the United Free Church of Scotland, and the Dutch Reformed Church in America. Of this union the Malabar Suffragan and other members of the Mar Thoma Syrian Church have said: "We believe that it is under the guidance of the Spirit that union is now proposed between the Anglican, Syrian, and Free Church bodies. This would unite three churches representing the Western Catholic, the Eastern Catholic, and the Free Protestant Churches. It would be the first instance in history where union has been effected between the East and the West, between Catholic and Protestant, between episcopal and non-episcopal bodies. The prayer of centuries would thus be answered."

In July, 1922, the Ecumenical Patriarch officially notified the Archbishop of Canter-

bury that the Synod of his Patriarchate had recognized Anglican ordinations as having the same historic validity as those of the Roman, Old Catholic, and Armenian Churches. This would seem to make possible a formal alliance of the Anglican Church with the churches of the Near East. The Anglican Church has made overtures to the Wesleyan Church in Great Britain and to the Eastern Orthodox Church, and the Protestant Episcopal Church in America has proposed a concordat with the Congregationalists whereby there may be a mutual recognition of orders and a mutual interchange of ministers.

5. Denominational. These are all movements in the right direction. We hail them with great thanksgiving and a renewed faith in the coming of the kingdom of God upon the earth. We are disposed enthusiastically to favor and as far as may be possible to forward the whole movement toward the reunion of the sects into great churches and we see in every such union one step in advance toward the realization of the Master's prayer that the church might be one even as he and the Father were one, and the apostle's prayer that the church in the unity of the spirit might keep the bond of peace. We will give our support to every such movement as soon

as it comes within the horizon of possibilities. In the United States, Methodism North and South ought to be one church to-day. Presbyterianism North and South ought to be united soon. The Baptist Church North and South ought to be one church organization. The reasons for division among these great bodies ought to be buried with the generation which fought out the Civil War. The restoration of peace under one national government ought to be followed now by the restoration of peace in one ecclesiastical organization in each of these churches. We hope to live to see the day of such blessed consummation.

The smaller Methodisms probably would come back into the parent fold if the two great branches of the church were reunited; and then the one great Methodist Episcopal Church of America would represent a larger membership and a greater power for good than any division of Protestantism has yet attained on this continent. If the other great denominations would thus become united among themselves, the question of union among the denominations might be agitated and in time it might become a possibility. If the Methodists and Presbyterians and Congregationalists of Canada can unite, the same union can be made in the United States.

6. National. What brought the thirteen original colonies together into one nation? They saw the inefficiency and the waste of their separate life and the advantages there would be in co-operation. They formed a federation first and each of the colonies was jealous of its own rights and more or less suspicious of its neighbors; but acquaintanceship brought increasing confidence, and in working together they realized that they had common aims and common needs and that they were brethren in their common spirit and life. Experience proved that they were in the line of progress and in united effort they found they had indefinitely multiplied strength. Their common dangers and their mutual helpfulness led them at last to the conclusion that united they could stand while divided they must fail. So they formed a union, each of them surrendering whatever was necessary to make the union a practical reality, and in that way the United States of America began the decades of its increasingly prosperous and efficient career.

What if we could have the United Church of these United States of America? Can any one doubt that it would be more efficient and more Christian than our divided and competing denominations are? Such a church could

represent the mind of the Master in its oneness of spirit and effort better than our divided churches can. Such a church could make its voice effective far better than our many divided churches can. Such a church could exert an influence and a force far superior to that of our individual denominations. Its power for righteousness would far transcend that of our separated sects, and in its unity of consecration and its combined wisdom and devotion it would in the end be irresistible in its victorious advance toward the establishment of the kingdom of God on this earth.

When the union of the States had been accomplished, George Washington wrote a remarkable prayer for the new nation: "Almighty God, we make our earnest prayer that thou wilt keep the United States in thy holy protection; that thou wilt incline the hearts of the citizens to cultivate a spirit of subordination and obedience to the government, and entertain a brotherly affection and love for one another and for their fellow citizens of the United States at large. And, finally, that thou wilt most graciously be pleased to dispose us all to do justice, to love mercy, and to demean ourselves with that charity, humility, and pacific temper of mind which were the

characteristics of the Divine Author of our blessed religion, and without a humble imitation of whose example in these things we can never hope to be a happy nation. Grant our supplication, we beseech thee, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

We are told that that prayer is offered up in the service in the Memorial Chapel at Valley Forge on every Sunday. What more appropriate prayer, with the necessary change of a few words and phrases, could be offered for the future United Church of these United States of America? "Almighty God, we make our earnest prayer that thou wilt keep the United Church in thy holy protection; that thou wilt incline the hearts of its members to cultivate a spirit of subordination and obedience to its government, and entertain a brotherly affection and love for one another and for their fellow members of the United Church at large. And, finally, that thou wilt most graciously be pleased to dispose us all to do justice, to love mercy, and to demean ourselves with that charity, humility, and pacific temper of mind which were the characteristics of the Divine Author of our blessed religion, and without a humble imitation of whose example in these things we can never hope to be a happy and efficient Christendom.

Grant our supplication, we beseech thee, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

A church of the multiplied millions of Christians in America, one in spirit and one in organization, praying that prayer and receiving the answer to that prayer, would be such a mighty power making for righteousness that the material prosperity of the United States of America would be equaled and more than equaled by the spiritual prosperity of all the interests of the kingdom of God in this land and in all the lands. Organized vice never would be able to stand before it. Such a church could close the saloon forever, and abolish the bootlegger, and shame the scofflaw out of existence. It could purify politics and outlaw war and cleanse the slums and obtain justice for labor and establish liberty, equality, and fraternity among the races. It could do everything which the United Church of Christ, one and inseparable, now and forever, ought to do in this world, and which our individual and separate sects have been unable to do with all their strenuous but divided, all their independent but impotent, endeavor.

7. **International.** Our task is too large for any one denomination. America never can be made Methodist. South America never can be made Protestant. Chicago never can be

made Presbyterian. India never can be made Episcopalian. The world never can be made Roman Catholic. It is our hope and our faith that the world can be made Christian. A united church could win all men to its Christ. A united church could make Chicago and America and China and India and the world what the Master desired them to be when he sent his disciples out to preach and to teach in all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.

The United Church of Canada stands like a beacon light to the world. The United Church of the United States would be a still greater memorial to the triumph of the spirit of Christ among men. It might lead to still other unions along national lines and then international unions would be sure to follow; and at the long last the organic unity of the churches of Christendom might herald the dawn of the final victory of Christ in the world.

PART TWO: HINDRANCES

CHAPTER I

CHURCH ORGANIZATION

WHEN the church is one, will it be an episcopal or a non-episcopal church? The chances are that it will be an episcopal church. The government of three fourths or four fifths of Christendom to-day is episcopal in character. The episcopal churches claim to represent continuous organization from the beginning, and without any question they do antedate any and all of our modern sects. They have as good a claim to New Testament sanction as any other form of government can maintain. We believe that the presbyterial form of government finds an equal sanction in the New Testament. We believe that no particular form of independency or episcopacy can claim the exclusive sanction of the Sacred Book. *Therefore we believe that any form of church government might well be sacrificed to bring about a reunited Christendom.*

1. **No Exclusive Scriptural Sanction.** Edwin Hatch finds no New Testament sanction for any exclusive form of church government. He says:

"As far as can be gathered from any

simple interpretation of the text, the church polity of the New Testament seems to have been capable of taking several other forms than that which, in the divine economy, ultimately established itself. It has the elements of an ecclesiastical monarchy in the position which is assigned to the apostles. It has the elements of an ecclesiastical oligarchy in the fact that the rulers of the church are almost always spoken of in the plural. It has the elements of an ecclesiastical democracy in the fact, among others, that the appeal which Paul makes to the Corinthians on a question of ecclesiastical discipline is made neither to bishops nor to presbyters, but to the community at large.

"It offers a sanction to episcopacy in the fact that bishops are expressly mentioned and their qualifications described: it offers a sanction to presbyterianism in the fact that the mention of bishops is excluded from all but one group of epistles. It supports the proposition that the church should have a government in the injunctions which it gives to obey those who rule. It supports, on the other hand, the claim of the Montanists of the early days, and the Puritans of later days, in the pre-eminence which it assigns to spiritual gifts. Which of these elements, and what fusion of

them, was destined in the divine order to prevail, must be determined, not so much by exegesis, as by history."

2. **Church Free.** If these things are true, we may grant that many of the principal differences in church government represented in the churches of to-day may have an equal claim to the sanction of the New Testament, and that questions of expediency may determine what the form of government in the future church shall be. The fact of the case would seem to be that the New Testament has no final authoritative word on the subject of church organization, and therefore the church of the future may feel itself free to adopt any form of organization which may best serve the interests of the Kingdom in its day. This was the conclusion reached in the Methodist Conference of 1747, "that in the nature of things there must be numberless variations in the government of various churches; as God variously dispenses his gifts of nature, providence, and grace, both the offices themselves and the officers in each ought to be varied from time to time."

The Methodist Church of Australasia has taken a proper position when it said: "We desire to state our conviction that neither in our Lord's own teaching nor in any part of the

New Testament is one form of church polity prescribed as essential to the church, and that no one order of the ministry can claim the direct commission of Christ or of his apostles as giving to it an authority to which no other is entitled."

The Bishops of the Church of Sweden agree when they say, "No particular organization of the church and of its ministry is instituted *iure divino,* not even the order and discipline and state of things recorded in the New Testament, because the Holy Scriptures, the *norma normans* of the faith of the Church, are no law, but vindicate for the New Covenant the great principle of Christian freedom, unweariedly asserted by Saint Paul against every form of legal religion, and applied with fresh strength and clearness by Luther, but instituted by our Saviour himself, as, for instance, when, in taking farewell of his disciples, he did not regulate their future work by *a priori* rules and institutions, but directed them to the guidance of the Paraclete, the Holy Ghost."

3. **Majority Rule.** The practical question confronting us now is, Shall the large majority adopt the form of government preferred by the small minority? Shall the four fifths go over to the one fifth or shall the one fifth come over to the four fifths? The probability

would seem to be that if the church becomes organically one, the smaller number must be willing to unite with the larger number at this point. The episcopacy may be made more democratic. It may be modified in any representative and constitutional manner. Yet the fact remains that past history has made it "the best instrument for maintaining the unity and continuity of the church."

If the Anglican Church in Great Britain and the Protestant Episcopal Church in America should give up their episcopal ordination, it would split their own churches from top to bottom and it would render all hope of reunion with the other ancient churches of Christendom a foolish and impossible dream. The historic episcopate is an essential part of the institution in the Greek Orthodox and the Roman Catholic and the Anglican communions, and the rest of us must come into some kind of working relation to it if we become an integral part of this great majority of the Christian organizations.

4. **The Concordat.** In the Concordat between the Congregational and the Protestant Episcopal churches in 1919 it was expressly stated that "we agree to acknowledge that the recognized position of the episcopate in the greater part of Christendom as the normal

nucleus of the church's ministry and as the organ of the unity and continuity of the church is such that the members of the Episcopal churches ought not to be expected to abandon it in assenting to any basis of reunion."

That was a great deal for the Congregationalists to agree to acknowledge. It is not many years since Philip Schaff said: "The historic episcopate is the stumbling-block to all non-Episcopalians, and will never be conceded by them as a condition of church unity," and Josiah Strong, after stating the position of both the episcopal and the non-episcopal portions of the church, declared, "There can be no possibility of compromise between them. The only alternative to conflict is unconditional surrender; and Baptists and Congregationalists could not surrender so vital a point without deeming themselves disloyal to the truth, which is true also of all non-Episcopal churches." What these men declared to be impossible has come to pass in the Concordat, as far as the Congregationalists signing it were concerned.

Time works wonders along these lines. Harnack calls attention to the fact that three hundred years ago Lutherans and Calvinists seemed to be hopelessly separated from each

other, just as hopelessly as Lutherans and Catholics are at the present time. Yet now for a generation or more Lutherans and Calvinists have belonged to the Evangelical Union together, and thousands of their members do not know that anything ever seriously separated them from each other. Three hundred years ago no one could have foreseen it or would have been likely to believe it possible. Is it not possible, then, that three hundred years from now Protestants and Catholics may be in the same way united?

The Swedish Lutheran Church is an episcopal church, with its succession recognized by the Anglican Church. The Norwegian and Danish and Finnish Lutherans have bishops but claim for them no direct historical apostolic succession. The Evangelical Church of the Prussian union is now contemplating a change of title for their seventeen "Superintendents General" to "Bishops" with no change in the functions of the office.

The Methodist Episcopal Church in America has had bishops from the beginning. The episcopal organization has been most widely adopted by Christian organizations from the earliest days. It has maintained itself through the centuries. It is in use by the large ma-

jority of the disciples of Jesus to-day. It would seem by the verdict of past and present history to be destined to be the final form of organization in the Holy Catholic Church of the future days.

5. Bishop Weston. When Bishop Weston, of Zanzibar, proposed his plan of union for the churches in East Africa, he said that if the non-Episcopal bodies would consent to some Episcopal consecration and ordination so as to enable them to minister, by invitation, in Episcopal churches, he for his part would gladly come before any of their congregations and accept any form of popular recognition. He could not move from his own position, or allow doubt to be cast upon his ministerial authority received by ordination and consecration. But if the church's forms were held to be weak on the side of popular recognition, he would not refuse whatever the other bodies thought to be necessary to make his ministry among them acceptable. This he could do in good faith, since our Lord Jesus Christ, who desires a united church, knows the thoughts and motives of our hearts. As we understand this, the Bishop would stand by his own ordination as all-sufficient and would ask all others who ministered in Episcopal churches to submit to the same

ordination, and, on the other hand, he would submit to what the non-Episcopal churches called an ordination but which he would regard simply as a form of popular recognition in order that he might have the privilege of ministering in their pulpits without any question as to his rights there, whenever he was invited to do so. Can there be any serious objection to any such proposition? We recognize the validity of his orders, even without his submission to our forms of ordination. He is willing to submit to our forms, if we ask it. Might we not in good faith submit to his form of ordination if he asks it, in order to minister in his churches without any question? We might no more repudiate our own ordinations than he does his, and we might regard his ordination simply as a form of popular recognition in order to practical service. That could be done in all good conscience on both sides and we would have a united church in that way.

6. **Lambeth Proposal.** That was the proposal in the Lambeth appeal of the Church of England to all Christian peoples. They said in that appeal that if the authorities of other communions should so desire, they were persuaded that, terms of union having been otherwise satisfactorily adjusted, bishops and

clergy of their communion would willingly accept from these authorities a form of commission or recognition which would commend their ministry to all other congregations as having its place in the one family life. They said that it was not in their power to know how far this suggestion might be acceptable to those to whom they offered it. They could only say that they offered it in all sincerity as a token of their longing that all ministers of grace, those of other churches as well as their own, should be available for the service of our Lord in a united church. Then they added that it was their hope that the same motive would lead ministers who had not received it to accept a commission through episcopal ordination, as obtaining for them a ministry throughout the whole fellowship.

This seems like a fair proposition, equally fair all around. Ought we not to be willing to accept it as an honest proposition, opening a practical way to the reunion of Christendom? Bishop Leighton accepted episcopal ordination with this understanding. Professor C. A. Briggs passed from the Presbyterian ministry into the Protestant Episcopal ministry under the same conditions. Could not any other peace-loving soul do the same thing? On two different occasions the Scottish Epis-

copal Church has accepted a whole clergy with only Presbyterian ordinations, in 1610 and in 1661; and the Anglican Church in each case recognized the procedure as legitimate. In that Scottish Church new ordinations were regularly performed by the simultaneous laying on of the hands of both bishops and presbyters. What has been done may be done again with equal legitimacy and with equally good results.

The Lambeth appeal went on to say: "In so acting no one of us could possibly be taken to repudiate his past ministry. God forbid that any man should repudiate a past experience rich in spiritual blessings for himself and others. Nor would any of us be dishonoring the Holy Spirit of God, whose call led us to our several ministries, and whose power enabled us to perform them. We shall be publicly and formally seeking additional recognition of a new call to wider service in a reunited church, and imploring for ourselves God's grace and strength to fulfill the same."

This appeal of the Lambeth Conference is a challenge to all Christian peoples. It is the most commanding challenge yet issued from any authoritative quarter. It is a summons to undertake an adventure of faith and good will, a crusade for the restoration of the

broken unity of the Church of Christ. It cannot be ignored by other Christian bodies without incurring grave responsibility. It is a serious attempt to find a new way and to take the first steps along that way. The first steps are the most difficult, always. Things will move more easily and rapidly after the first steps have been taken.

What will the other churches do about it? The Lambeth Conference appeals not merely for the unity of the Christian spirit but for the unity of the body of Christ. It believed that that unity was the will of our Lord and that it ought to be realized and made visible among men. It offered a practical solution of one of the chief problems and one that does not involve the compromise of any essential principle and which maintains the dignity and expresses the humility of all concerned in an earnest effort to come together in one body for the glory of God.

The fathers may have believed that the bishops of the Established Church were aristocratic and bigoted and intolerant, and they may have had ample warrant for that belief in the days of King James, who said: "If you aim at a Scotch presbytery, it agreeth as well with monarchy as God and the devil. Then Jack and Tom and Dick will meet and cen-

sure me and my council." The fathers may have had just and sufficient reason to identify the spirit of episcopacy and of the monarchy in those days and to have revolted into absolute independence in both church and state. Those troublous days have passed, and we ought not to cherish the prejudices then engendered. The bishops of to-day may not be bigoted and intolerant. They may be as reasonable and Christian in their spirit as the makers of the Lambeth appeal seem to be.

We may believe that all the authority of the church has been vested by Christ himself in the people of God as distinct from any clerical and sacerdotal hierarchy and yet be willing for the sake of reunion to submit to episcopal ordination. We may believe that church membership ought to be based only upon a desire to flee from the wrath to come and to lead a new life in the power of a new birth, and yet be willing to be ordained by a bishop, in order to have the privilege of preaching our saving truth to those who are so benighted as to believe that grace is transmitted only through particular channels and is secured only through the sacraments of baptism and confirmation. If we are Christian brethren, it does not matter what we believe concerning these things if we are willing to

take such measures as will enable us to work together in Christian love.

Dr. Norman Maclean objects to the use of the word "irregularity" in connection with his admittance to the sacrament in any Anglican church, and he says: "If I am a member of the Holy Catholic Church, then going to the holy sacrament in any church cannot be an irregularity." He objects more strenuously still to the proposal of reordination, and he says: "I can assure you that in Scotland these conditioning clauses put those proposals out of practical politics. Not even the most vivid imagination could imagine the minister of Saint Giles' Cathedral asking a license from any bishop to preach in another church in Scotland." Such statements savor of practical politics more than of lowliness and meekness and longsuffering and forbearance in love.

We can hope and pray for the time, and we can almost imagine it within our own generation, when the minister of Saint Giles' Cathedral will give an ordination to an Anglican bishop in order that the Anglican bishop may conduct a service and preach the gospel there, and then will accept of an ordination at the Anglican bishop's hands in order to return the courtesy in some one or all of his churches.

What should hinder that blessed consummation if the hearts of those two brethren are knit together in Christian love and they are equally determined to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace?

When the representatives of the Free Churches and of the Established Church in England presented their Second Interim Report they said, "In putting forward these proposals we do so because it must be felt by all good-hearted Christians as an intolerable burden to find themselves permanently separated in respect of religious worship and communion from those in whose characters and lives they recognize the surest evidences of the indwelling Spirit." It is a sufficient justification of any effort in the direction of ultimate organic unity. Surely all Christians of good hearts will labor and pray unceasingly to that end, and they will be willing to sacrifice some at least of their inveterate independence and partisan prejudice.

Surely, all Christians of good hearts will not permit the present day episcopacy to stand in the way of reunion, especially when the same committee reports that "the acceptance of episcopacy on these terms should not involve any Christian community in the necessity of disowning its past, but should en-

able all to maintain the continuity of their witness and influence as heirs and trustees of types of Christian thought, life, and order, not only of value to themselves but of value to the church as a whole. Accordingly, we hope and desire that each of these communions would bring its own distinctive contribution, not only to the common life of the church, but also to its methods of organization, and that all that is true in the experience and testimony of the uniting communions would be conserved to the church. Within such a recovered unity we should agree in claiming that the legitimate freedom of prophetic ministry should be carefully preserved; and in anticipating that many customs and institutions which have been developed in separate communities may be preserved within the larger unity of which they have come to form a part."

We believe that the unity of the spirit is not dependent upon unity of government and that it can be maintained with all the variety of organization we have in the church of today. Neither denominationalism nor ecclesiasticism need be a bar to the most complete unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. However, all who believe in and realize this unity of the spirit seem to long for organic unity

as its only satisfactory expression. A conference on the Organic Union of the Evangelical Churches of America was held in Philadelphia in 1918 and a committee appointed at that time has worked out a preamble and plan for such union. It is simply a first step in the direction of organic unity and does not pretend to be an ideal or perfectly complete program.

7. **A Plan of Union.** The preamble states our present unity of faith in the following words:

Whereas, We desire to share, as a common heritage, the faith of the Christian Church, which has, from time to time, found expression in great historic statements; and,

Whereas, We all share belief in God our Father; in Jesus Christ his only Son our Saviour; in the Holy Spirit our Guide and Comforter; in the Holy Catholic Church, through which God's eternal purpose of salvation is to be proclaimed and the kingdom of God is to be realized on earth; in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, as containing God's revealed will, and in the life eternal; and,

Whereas, Having the same spirit and owning the same Lord, we none the less recognize diversity of gifts and ministrations for whose exercise due freedom must always be afforded in forms of worship and in modes of operation, we offer the following plan for organic union:

We, the churches hereto assenting, do hereby agree to associate ourselves in a visible body to be known as the United Churches of America, for the furtherance of the redemptive work of Christ in the world.

Then follow two very significant statements:

> In the interest of the freedom of each and of the co-operation of all, each constituent church reserves the right to retain its credal statements, its form of government in the conduct of its own affairs, and its particular mode of worship. In taking this step, we look forward with confident hope to that complete unity toward which we believe the Spirit of God is leading us. Once we shall have co-operated wholeheartedly in such visible body, in the holy activities of the work of the church, we are persuaded that our differences will be minimized and our union become more vital and effective.

8. No Change of Government. The approach to unity here proposed would not touch the present forms of church government. The Bishop of London made a proposal for union with the Wesleyan Methodist Church, and in it he said that the Methodist Church would continue its class meetings and its Conferences, would retain its connection and its order in the reunited church, and would go on with its habits and its practices undisturbed. That would be perfectly possible in an organic union, but it probably would be rather awkward and cumbersome, and in the process of the years it might be expected that any angularities of administration would be smoothed out and the ecclesiastical machinery would become so adjusted that there

would be as little friction as possible. That would be desirable rather than otherwise.

What is true between the Wesleyans and the Church of England from which they have sprung but from which they differ so widely in administration to-day, being non-episcopal and non-conformist throughout, could be equally true between any other groups in the Christian world. They could form an organic union, retaining their present governments and entire control of their own affairs, while carrying on their work not as separate and opposed communions but as united and mutually helpful portions of one great church. Unity of administration could be secured by a general council or executive boards and their work could be doubled in efficiency by their co-operative organization.

A Commission of the Episcopal Church in America has formulated a Concordat as a basis for negotiations looking toward union with the Orthodox and the Old Catholic churches and in this Concordat they say: "Each particular autonomous part of the Catholic Church has authority to regulate its own internal government, ritual, and spiritual discipline in adjustment to its peculiar racial, national, and modern conditions and circumstances." *General recognition of this*

fact would make any established form of church government no bar to union in the Holy Catholic Church.

If the episcopacy has seemed to be a bugbear to some of our most independent brethren, and if the episcopacy would seem to be likely to maintain itself in the large majority of the Christian communions, it need not be a bar to complete organic unity in Christendom as long as it will recognize other forms of church government as equally valid and authoritative for those Christians who prefer them.

CHAPTER II

FORMS OF WORSHIP

ORGANIC unity would be consistent with perfect freedom in forms of worship. Differences of belief as to the necessary mode of baptism ought to be no bar to organic union of effort to further the redemptive work of Christ in the world.

1. **Baptism.** We know a man whose grandparents were baptized by pouring. They kneeled down in the water of the little creek which flowed through their farm in Ohio and the preacher filled a tin cup with the creek water and poured it upon their heads as a symbol of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon them. His parents were baptized by sprinkling, in a church service. He himself was baptized by immersion, not in a tank of dead and still water but in a river, a living and flowing stream like the Jordan, in which Jesus himself underwent that rite of initiation to his life ministry. This man says that as far as he can see the mode of their baptism made no difference in the Christian character of his grandparents or his parents or himself. They all seemed to be equally good people.

They all seemed to have received sacramental grace in their baptism in about equal measure.

He says that for himself he preferred immersion, but he realizes that in the Arctic circle immersion might be inconvenient and undesirable, and that in the middle of the Sahara it might be impossible; and in the latter case he says that he sees no good reason why baptism might not be administered in good faith and with good results by sprinkling or pouring or immersion in sand instead of in water. To him one symbol is just as good as another. Not all people feel that way. They think that baptism must be administered in one particular way or it is not administered at all. As for this man to whom we have referred, he is perfectly willing to enter into an organic union with such people, with the understanding that such union does not necessitate ritual uniformity. He thinks that sacramental grace is not confined to any one particular channel.

2. Lord's Supper. There was a good old New England Puritan who because of some church quarrel was excommunicated by his church but who had no other church to attend and who therefore decided that he would not stay excommunicated. For twenty years

he came to church on every communion Sunday and brought with him a bit of bread and a bit of wine from his own home and in the seclusion and the safety of his own high pew he communed with the church in spite of the deacons. If his heart was at one with his brethren, was not that a valid communion? If a man brings his own communion with him, who can bar him from the spiritual Table of the Lord?

Lord Strathallan lay dying on the field of Culloden and he wished the sacrament of the communion to be administered to him. Neither bread nor wine was anywhere at hand in that moment of extremity and the communion was ministered to him with a bit of oatcake and a sip of whisky. Did God refuse to give the dying nobleman any sacramental grace because the usual or the right and the appointed conditions were not there, or did he receive the will for the deed and bless the symbols of oatcake and whisky just as much as the symbols of bread and wine?

If wheaten bread is not obtainable, may not bread-fruit or rice-cakes or cassava-bread be used in its stead? If no fruit of the vine is accessible, will not date wine serve as well? May not the ordinary diet of the people answer anywhere at any time just as well as the bread

and wine of Palestine in the days of our Lord? He used the elements nearest at hand in the celebration of the Last Supper. May not his disciples do the same? Doubtless some would shrink with horror from any such suggestion but others will be sure that it has much common sense behind it.

3. **Posture.** Most of the details of our ritual are matters of habit and inheritance and represent certain temperaments and tastes rather than any profound principles or vital differentiations. Some Christians stand when they pray and some kneel down and the prayers seem to be about equally efficacious in either position.

4. **Vestments.** Some ministers dress in robes and some dress in ordinary clothes, and the efficiency of the service does not seem to depend upon the costumes of the officiating clergy. We have been told by some of our Roman Catholic friends that they could not hold certain services on shipboard because they did not have the proper vestments with them, and we have wondered if they really could believe that the clothes they wore would make any essential difference in the efficacy of their service.

It is a matter of historical fact that the distinctive dress of the clergy arose first in

the Eastern and Gallican churches, and the Roman Church very much disapproved of it at that time. A Pope of the fifth century wrote to certain Gallican bishops who had adopted special vestments, saying, "We should be distinguished from the people by our learning, not by our clothes." However, for many centuries now the Roman Catholic clergy have been using vestments of many colors, and they would feel ill at ease without them in certain services, and some of them have come to think that they must have the vestments to have any service at all.

Organic union would be possible between brethren in different styles and colors of clothes. Prince Alberts and cutaways and sack coats and plain Geneva gowns and gorgeously colored robes like those of Solomon in all his glory could tolerate each other and work in co-operation in the same pulpit or the same diocese or the same enterprise or the same institution. Forms of worship would not need to be changed in a beginning organic union.

Surely, the time for making new denominations because of different modes of worship or for any other equally trivial reason has passed. *Any people who are endeavoring to divide existing denominations at the present*

day are doing unchristian work even if it be under the guise of zeal for the truth. Both the church and the world are beginning to realize that the Master's will is that we be one. The steady onward movement will be toward reunion. *"Sed revocare gradus, Hic labor, hoc opus est."* It will take time and prayer and earnest effort. There must be the sacrifice of pride and prejudice and habits and forms. There must be the cultivation of kindliness and brotherliness.

Lord Halifax was speaking in the Spirit of Christ when he said: "Men are led much more by their hearts than by their heads, and I am certain that a great work is to be done just now in the direction of peace if all really wished for it, and would work for it in love and for love's sake, putting themselves in the position of those they want to win, and thinking only of our Lord, and nothing of their own side or of themselves. The truth is the one and the only thing we should all work to establish. And how can this be done, and our divisions healed except by making the very best of one another instead of the worst, going out of our way to make excuses and allowances for all we think we see amiss in others who seem to be opposed to us and steadily resisting the temptation of taking advantage

of this or that which may appear for the moment to support our own side?"

5. **A Personal Attitude.** We will seek the mind of Christ in and for ourselves. We will follow after purity and all that makes for peace. We will seek for the truth and we will speak the truth in love. We will build up our own religious life, and in so doing we will find our hearts knit up into the secret of religious unity, growing with all the saints into Him who is the Head, even Christ. Then we will give ourselves gladly and courageously to a persistent propaganda for the peace and the unity of the church. We will be ready for concessions, not of principles but of preferences and of prejudices and of long-cherished opinions and of firmly established desires and habits of having our own way. We will be "prepared to make sacrifices for the sake of a common fellowship, a common ministry, and a common service to the world."

We have been talking about organic union for a long time. We have been negotiating and bargaining with each other, surrendering as little as possible of our own privileges and prejudices, hanging on to as much as we could of our own traditions and preferences. What did the Master say? "Whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his

life for my sake, the same shall save it." If our talk about our desire for church unity amounts to anything, we must mount to this plane of self-renunciation and sacrifice. We must quit our haggling and maneuvering and begin conceding and sacrificing for the cause.

We can make these concessions and sacrifices without touching any one of the essentials mentioned by Paul in his platform of principles upon which the unity of the Spirit must rest. These things alone are of primary importance and necessity. All other things are of secondary value; and since these bases of spiritual unity can be maintained with different organizations, as we have said, it follows that the union of the different organizations would in no wise affect the continued maintenance of these essential and common truths. Individually, therefore, we stand ready to join any or all other Christians on the Pauline platform of unity in a single ecclesiastical organization. If other Protestant churches or if Roman Catholicism will not agree to organic union on these principles, the fault of the failure to reunite our Christendom will lie with them and not with us. We stand ready for this action at any time.

6. Denominational Loyalty. In the meantime this willingness to unite with other

churches does not in the least lessen our loyalty to our own particular church. As Bishop Simpson once said, "We live to make our own church a power in the land and to love every other church that serves our Christ." We do not belong to that class of individuals who declare that they are not sectarian, that they like one denomination just as well as another, and they are so much at home with all that they do not find a home in any one of them. They are ecclesiastical indifferentists. They are spiritual freebooters. Their individualism is more fatal to the unity of the church than all the sectarianism of Christendom.

We are first of all members of our own church, and we desire a league offensive and defensive with all soldiers of the Lord Christ. That league may be an organic union with those who have no connection by tradition or otherwise with our ecclesiastical antecedents and we may be willing to sacrifice any specifically denominational name; but we stand ready always to form a league or a confederation or a union with all other Christians everywhere. On our side we are giving diligence to preserve the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. We find our own organization no hindrance to our doing that.

The unity of the spirit does not necessitate unity of organization. It can be maintained without organic union. We so maintain it.

We believe that the holy catholic church comprises all holy and loving persons in all the denominations. We belong to this universal church as well as to our particular organization. We say with the poet:

"All who speak Truth to me commissioned are;
All who love God are in my church embraced.
Not that I have no sense of preference—
None deeper!—but I rather love to draw,
Even here, on earth, on toward the future law
And heaven's fine etiquette, where 'Who?' and 'Whence?'
May not be asked; and at the Wedding Feast,
North shall sit down with South, and West with East!"

At the same time we believe that insofar as different denominations lead to bitterness of antagonism or rivalry in selfish effort, they are altogether wrong and contrary to the mind of Christ. Insofar as divisions result in these things we sympathize with Chrysostom's opinion that "nothing so provokes God's anger as the division of the church. Yea, though we have achieved ten thousand glorious acts, yet shall we, if we cut to pieces the fullness of the Christ, suffer punishment no less sore than they who mangled his

body. For that, indeed, was brought to pass for the benefit of the world, even though it was done with no such intention; whereas this produces no such advantage in any case, but the injury is excessive."

CHAPTER III

CREEDS

ORGANIC unity would not necessitate any very extensive unity in belief. The basis of union suggested at the Philadelphia Conference included faith in God, in Jesus, in the Holy Spirit, in the holy catholic church, and in the Scriptures as a sufficient platform for all the evangelical churches to stand upon. It might be desirable to find some simple declaration of purpose and faith upon which all could agree, but it is not imperative that we do so.

1. **Possible.** (1) Such a basis for co-operation and union has been suggested in these words, "Inasmuch as the real test of our Christianity is that our daily conduct shall harmonize with the will of God, as declared by Jesus Christ, through the power of the Holy Spirit, we therefore declare our intention of working together in a Christian spirit with all who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity:

To improve and intensify our personal experience of God by the regular and faithful use of every means of grace.

To live in such a way that men everywhere

shall be able to take note of us that we have been with Jesus.

To follow the guidance of the Holy Spirit, who will lead us into all truth.

To promote harmonious relations with all men.

To seek that unity which shall make us all one in Christ Jesus.

To promote effective Christianity in the endeavor to make the kingdoms of this world the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ."

It would seem that no Christian need have any hesitation in subscribing to such a declaration of purpose as that.

(2) A more definitely creedal statement of common faith has been proposed in the following form:

"I believe in God, the Father of all;
And in Jesus Christ, Revealer of God, and Saviour of men:
And in the Spirit of Holiness, which is the spirit of God and of Jesus:
By which Spirit man is made divine:
I acknowledge the communion of all faithful people,
In beauty, goodness, and truth:
And I believe in the forgiveness of sins, the glory of righteousness,
The victory of love, and the life eternal."

Surely, anything but captious criticism would be willing to accept such a formula of faith.

(3) Another still briefer formulation of

the corporate faith of all of our churches is suggested in these words:

"We believe in one God: the Father, the Author of everlasting life; the Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, our Redeemer; the Holy Spirit, our Sanctifier.

"And we pray God to keep us steadfast in this faith, and that it may be not only confessed by our lips, but manifested in our lives by a humble, holy, and obedient walking before him."

A recent writer suggests that any modern creed ought to be formulated "in clear and simple propositions, intelligible to all, moving primarily or even exclusively in the atmosphere of the Gospels, and dealing exclusively with those fundamental principles whereby men live, and whereby they live the Christian life," and then, in illustration of his thought, he suggests such articles as these: "I believe that God is a loving Father; I believe that God is like Jesus." We are reminded of that saying of Zinzendorf, "*Wenn es auch ein anderer Gott giebt, so bleibe ich bei dem Herrn Jesu*"; but the next article suggested repudiates any such possibility. "I believe that in knowing Jesus I know God; I believe that God calls me to be like Jesus; I believe that the way of Jesus is the Ideal way;

I believe that I ought to love and serve God; I believe that I ought to love and serve my fellow man; I believe that my neighbor's good is as important to me as my own; I believe in the glory of humility and in the majesty of unselfishness; I believe in the supremacy of love and in the might of forgiveness; I believe not in grasping but in giving; I believe in the spirit of the good Samaritan; I believe in forgiving my enemies." Could not Roman Catholics and Greek Catholics and Protestants and all Christians agree on a creed like that?

James Denney at the close of his volume on Jesus and the Gospel arrived at what he considered an irreducible minimum of a common creed when he said, "It is perhaps not too bold to suggest that the symbol of the church's unity might be expressed thus: "I believe in God through Jesus Christ his only Son, our Lord and Saviour." Dr. Crothers of Cambridge says, "This bond of fellowship is sufficient for me: 'In the love of Truth and in the spirit of Jesus, we unite for the worship of God and the service of man.' If any one says, 'That is not the definition of a sect, but a wide statement of the purpose of the Holy Catholic Church,' I heartily agree with him, for it is to the Holy Catholic Church that I want to belong."

Abraham Lincoln is reported to have said that he never had united with any church because he found difficulty in giving his assent without mental reservation to the long, complicated statements of Christian doctrine which characterized their Articles of Belief and Confessions of Faith, and he declared that whenever any church would inscribe over its altar, as its sole qualification of membership, the Saviour's condensed statement of the substance of both law and gospel, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and thy neighbor as thyself," he would join that church with all his heart and with all his soul. Abraham Lincoln's suggestion might be a good one for the sufficient creed and platform of the united church.

The National Council of Congregational Churches in the United States has made the following declaration: "We hold dear certain forms in which we are accustomed to express our faith, but we have never used and will never use a creed for purposes of division or exclusion." Is this not the spirit of our Christ?

2. **Agreement Impossible.** *Any complete agreement in all matters of faith is not necessary and will be forever impossible.* All who

expect agreement upon infallible formulas in any lengthy creeds before there can be church union are cherishing vain hopes and wasting their time. The Apostles' Creed was proposed as a basis for co-operation at one time, and President McCosh of Princeton at once objected. "No, no!" said he, "I will not 'descend into hell' with the Episcopalians!" Something or other will not suit somebody in any creed of any considerable length. Yet we can unite in one organization.

There may be and there will be the widest divergence of opinion on many important things in the thoroughgoing unity of the spirit which will characterize the organic union of the one visible Church of Christ in the world. We have organic union in these United States and we have many opposing political parties with supposedly radically differing beliefs and policies and we vote with these parties, and yet we are all citizens of the one and undivided Union. We maintain our standing in any one of these political parties without subscribing to every detail of its policies and platform, or we proclaim our independence of any particular party allegiance and pick and choose our candidates among them and yet maintain our citizenship without question.

Possibly we now hold membership in a particular denomination with all of whose doctrines we do not find ourselves in perfect agreement, and yet we maintain our standing without any serious questioning as to our general orthodoxy. Would it not be possible to belong to a United Church just as we belong to the United States and preserve our particular loyalties and still be in orthodox standing as far as membership was concerned with all the differing parties inside the Union? Probably there would be as many parties inside the United Church as there are now in the United States, and we could get along together in the United Church with all our differing policies and platforms just as easily and just as fraternally as we do now in the United States with all our different political opinions and organizations. Republicans and Democrats are all alike citizens of the Union. Highchurchmen and evangelicals could be alike members of the United Church.

There has been organic unity in the Roman Catholic Church from the beginning, but there have been many different parties in the church at all times. The Nominalists have belabored the Realists, and Franciscans and Dominicans have represented different policies, and the Jesuits have slandered and per-

secuted the Port Royalists, and the Gallicans and the Ultramontanes have had no dealings with each other, and there are wide differences between the American and the Irish Catholics in the United States, and between the Papalists and the Nationalists in the Catholic Church in England. They all submit to the Pope, but they are far from seeing eye to eye in all things.

There have been High Church and Low Church and Broad Church people in the Episcopalian fold. There are ritualists and mystics, literalists and liberals in all our churches to-day. We have different temperaments and tastes in every local congregation.

Do all Methodists think alike? No, they think and let think. Do all Methodists have the same methods? By no means! There are Methodist churches made up of illiterate and emotional people who follow the old-fashioned revival methods of recruiting their membership with a whoop and hurrah. There are other Methodist churches which are like cathedrals in their architecture, and which minister to a cultured aristocracy and recruit their memberships by letters of transfer and religious education. There are open-communion and close-communion Baptist churches. There are almost as many different

kinds of Lutherans as there are different temperaments of men. There are Congregational churches whose Sunday services are characterized by a Puritan plainness, and there are others which have a surpliced priest and a marching choir and a full Episcopalian liturgy. These differences are existent inside our present denominations, and they do not seem to have proved incompatible with hearty co-operation in a single church claiming a common loyalty. If that is possible in the separate churches, would it not be just as possible in the larger united church of universal Christendom?

3. **Creeds Changeable.** Who could make a creed by which all should feel bound? He would need to formulate the final truth in words which could be understood by every man and would be misunderstood by none, and should be incapable forever of any improvement or change. He would need to be omniscient and infallible. *We would rather have an infallible Pope than an infallible creed, if either of these were possible.* An infallible Pope might conceivably be open to the leading of the Holy Spirit into new and higher truth, but an infallible creed would shut the door inexorably against any possibility of improvement through the centuries.

4. Creeds Fallible. The present creeds sometimes emphasize the points upon which large bodies of Christians have differed and make most prominent the things concerning which there has been most discord. Sometimes they are clearly compromises so framed as to admit of two or more interpretations. They are not infallible formulations, since they were formulated by fallible men. Infallibility is not to be reached by any summing up of fallible judgments. Final authority in matters of truth is not to be attained by any rounding up of a majority vote in any ecclesiastical body made up of men, some of whom are grossly ignorant and many of whom are greatly prejudiced and all of whom are confessedly fallible. That is the trouble with all the General Councils and Assemblies of Divines who have essayed to formulate and finally fix the Christian faith. They have not been adequate to the task. If we could have an adequately representative body, made up of perfectly holy men, free from all jealousies and antipathies and individual idiosyncrasies and prejudices, absolutely devoted to the truth and to the truth alone, and masters of all the knowledge available to that age, such a body might formulate a creed which would be adequate for their own time; but even that

creed would be antiquated as soon as any new truth had been discovered which would necessitate a readjustment of thought along the whole line.

Such a body of men never was assembled in all the history of the world, and it never will be until we have a millennium. The creed-making councils and assemblies of the church have all of them fallen far below this ideal. Some of them have been so bad that they fitted the description given by Gregory of Nazianzen to the assemblies of bishops in his day. He said: "I have never known one to terminate well. They strive only for power. They behave like angry lions to the small and like fawning spaniels to the great. It would seem as though a herald had convoked to the Council all the gluttons, villains, liars, and false swearers of the empire. I will never more sit in these assemblies of cranes and geese." One trembles to think that the ark of the Lord has been intrusted to such hands, and one rejoices to believe that the truth has come out of them in as good condition as it has.

Other councils have been better than these, but in some of them we read of decisions reached by fraud and bribery, and in the best of them we read of different parties and fierce and prolonged debates and final compromise

to obtain majority votes, and we sympathize fully with Oliver Wendell Holmes when he says:

"Not from the conclave where the holy men
Glare on each other, as with angry eyes
They battle for God's glory and their own,
Till, sick of wordy strife, a show of hands
Fixes the faith of ages yet unborn,—
Ah, not from these the listening soul can hear
The Father's voice that speaks itself divine!"

5. Limited by Language. Formulated creeds are only approximations to the truth, and their formulations are subject to different interpretations by different minds. Arthur James Balfour in his Gifford Lectures suggested this fact when he said: "Even when belief has not outgrown the formulas by which it has been traditionally expressed, we must beware of treating this fixity of form as indicating complete identity of substance. Men do not necessarily believe the same thing because they express their convictions in exactly the same phrases. And most fortunate it is in the interest of individual liberty, social co-operation, and institutional continuity that this latitude should be secured to us, not by the policy of philosophers, statesmen, or divines, but by the inevitable limitation of language."

6. Subject to Interpretation. It is with the

creeds as it is with the Scriptures. We have no infallibly guaranteed texts to begin with; and even if we did have them, the texts have no infallibly inspired interpreter. Each man interprets for himself, and many men are sure to interpret differently each from the other. Creeds cannot fix the faith, because the faith is a growing thing, and as the knowledge of the church increases, old formulations of the faith need to be modified in the light of new truth. It is for this reason that it always will be impossible for any formulated creed, of any length, extending into any details of doctrine, to be regulative of the faith of any considerable portion of the church for any considerable time.

Can anyone read the Westminster Confession of Faith or the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England or the Smalcald Articles or the Augsburg Apology or the Canons of the Council of Trent without being profoundly thankful that this is true? They may have been useful to their own generation, but they seem decidedly unlovely and undesirable to us. Did anybody ever hear of anyone being led to Christ by the reading of any of them? For the most part they suggest that the church was made up only of theologians of high intelligence and great discrimination.

For the most part they make no appeal to humble people, such as those among whom Jesus labored and to whom his truths were taught. Jesus never said to anybody: "Blessed are those who believe in the Trinity, for they shall be counted among the orthodox." He said, rather, "Blessed are those who are poor in spirit and pure in heart." He did not say to Matthew the publican, "Sign on the dotted line your subscription to the doctrine of the Homoousios." He said only, "Follow me."

Schleiermacher was right when he said that all that creeds "can do, as witnesses to the continuity of truth, is to demand that the later doctrinal developments be not altogether out of harmony with the spirit of the earlier. When anything beyond this is claimed for them, as if they had the power of stereotyping the form of belief, they are exalted to a position which endangers the very truth which they are supposed to defend. It is vain, then, to hope that the time will come when the church will believe only what is formally tabulated in her confessions. Such a time can come only when what is best in our theology is stifled by creeds, and when all connection between theology and general scientific culture has ceased."

7. **Adopted by Majority Votes.** Creeds are fixed by majority votes, but majority votes are not always inspired and infallible. The majority decided that Arius was right and Athanasius was wrong; but Athanasius stood alone against the world until the truth had proved itself mighty enough to prevail. The majority decided that the Copernican astronomy was wrong, and that Galileo must recant his heresy that the sun was the center of our system and that the earth moved round it; and Galileo recanted, but tradition has it that he said at the end of his recantation, "It still moves"; and so it does, in spite of the majority vote. Questions of fact are not to be settled by those who are ignorant of the facts, even though they may have a majority vote. The truth never can be established by the ecclesiastical authority of any man or any company of men.

"What decides me there?" said Luther. "No man, but only the truth itself which is so perfectly certain that nobody can deny it." That was a fundamental principle of the Protestant Reformation. Majorities might sometimes be in the right; and if they were, the individual could go with them in all good conscience; but if the majority seemed to him to be in the wrong, then it was his right and

it was his duty to protest in the name of his own reason and of his own conscience and to allow no authority to coerce him in these things. The Methodists in one of their early Conferences wheeled squarely into line on this issue. They said, "It is undeniably plain that no Christian can submit any further than this to any man or number of men upon earth, either to Pope, bishop, council, or convocation. This is that grand principle of every man's right to private judgment," upon which the Protestant Reformation was founded and in perfect agreement with which their church was established.

John Wesley set forth the pronunciamento for the entire church when he said: "Every one must follow the dictates of his own conscience, in simplicity and godly sincerity. He must be fully persuaded in his own mind, and then act according to the best light he has. Nor has any creature power to constrain another to walk by his own rule. God has given no right to any of the children of men, thus to lord it over the conscience of his brethren; but every man must judge for himself, as every man must give an account of himself unto God."

8. **Are But Opinions.** John Wesley began the sixtieth sermon in his printed works with

these words: "Whatsoever the generality of people may think, it is certain that opinion is not religion: no, not right opinion; assent to one, or to ten thousand truths. There is a wide difference between them: even right opinion is as distant from religion as the east is from the west. Persons may be quite right in their opinions, and yet have no religion at all; and on the other hand, persons may be truly religious who hold many wrong opinions. Can any one possibly doubt of this, while there are Romanists in the world? For who can deny not only that many of them formerly have been truly religious (as Thomas à Kempis, Gregory Lopez, and the Marquis de Renty), but that many of them, even at this day, are real inward Christians? And yet what a heap of erroneous opinions do they hold, delivered by tradition from their fathers! Nay, who can doubt of it while there are Calvinists in the world, asserters of absolute predestination? For who will dare to affirm that none of these are truly religious men? Not only many of them in the last century were burning and shining lights, but many of them are now real Christians, loving God and all mankind. And yet what are all the absurd opinions of all the Romanists in the world, compared to that one, that the God of love,

the wise, just, merciful Father of the spirits of all flesh, has, from all eternity, fixed an absolute, unchangeable, irresistible decree, that part of mankind shall be saved, do what they will, and the rest damned, do what they can! Hence, we cannot but infer, that there are ten thousand mistakes, which may consist with real religion; with regard to which every candid, considerate man will think and let think."

That is the foundation upon which a universal church must be built, the charitable belief that vast multitudes will be saved who differ with us in belief, even if they hold the most dangerous and erroneous doctrines. They may be just as religious as we are, and they may be more religious than we are, even though they are not half as orthodox. Religion and salvation do not depend upon the possession and the holding of the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. They depend upon the attitude of the heart toward God and man. Professor Bowne thus expresses the truth of the matter: "Let us say then with all conviction, that simple intellectual consent to a dogma can never be a ground for acceptance with God, and that simple rejection of a dogma can never be a ground of rejection by God. The guilt or in-

nocence of a soul can never be a matter of heterodoxy or orthodoxy, but only of the person's attitude toward his ideals of righteousness."

Is not this position in perfect harmony with the spirit of the Master who said, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven"?[1] Is it not in perfect accord with the teaching of Paul who said, "Who art thou that judgest the servant of another? to his own lord he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be made to stand; for the Lord hath power to make him stand. One man esteemeth one day above another; another esteemeth every day *alike.* Let each man be fully assured in his own mind"?[2] Let every man think and let think.

This was the position taken by William Chillingworth in his great work on the *Religion of Protestants,* in which he says, "To say that when a place of Scripture, by reason of ambiguous terms, lies indifferent between divers senses, whereof one is true and the other is false, that God obliges men, under pain of damnation, not to mistake through error and human frailty, is to make God a ty-

[1] Matt. 7. 21.

[2] Rom. 14. 4, 5.

rant; and to say that he requires us certainly to attain that end, for the attaining whereof we have no certain means . . . which, whether it can consist with his goodness, with his wisdom, and with his Word, I can leave it to honest men to judge. This I am sure of, as sure as that God is good, that he will require no impossibilities of us: not an infallible, nor a certainly unerring belief, unless he hath given us certain means to avoid error; and if we use those which we have, he will never require of us that we use that which we have not."

9. **Creed Subscription.** The National Council of the Evangelical Free Churches of England, considering the subject of church unity, adopted a report which said: "When assent to the creeds is required by the United Church, such assent should not be understood to imply the acceptance of them as a complete expression of the Christian faith, or as excluding reasonable liberty of interpretation. It should be understood to imply the acceptance of them as agreeable to the Word of God contained in the Holy Scriptures, as affirming essential elements in the Christian faith, and as preserving that faith in the form in which it has been handed down through many centuries in the history of the Christian Church."

It would seem that almost any one could assent to the fact that the historic creeds were ancient and incomplete symbols of scriptural Christian faith, to be subject to his personal interpretations in reasonable liberty.

When the committees considering a union of churches in South India came to the subject of creed they made this preliminary statement: "It ought to be observed first that individuals share the belief of the church in proportion to their capacity and experience. No two persons say any creed with precisely the same understanding. One may accept it as a whole as capable of being proved 'by most sure warrants of Holy Scripture' and as being the faith of the Church Universal throughout the ages. Some portions of the Creed he accepts in quite a different way, as having deeply influenced his own life and entered into the very heart of his thinking and feeling. With his growth in religion more and more of the Creed becomes part of his personal religious experience. But it is equally possible for him to give a conscientious assent to the clauses of the Creed either because they have entered into his religious life, or into the religious life of the Church, or simply because he believes them warranted by Holy Scripture.

"When clergy and others make a formal

declaration of assent to the Creed this should imply at least one of these three positions towards all its clauses. It is no business of the Church to inquire curiously into the individual's state of mind on each clause. By assent the Church means real assent and real assent may take any of the above-mentioned three forms." To these brethren then real assent would mean merely assent to the fact that the clauses of the Creed were warranted by scriptural passages or that they had been adopted by a majority of the Church in times past or that they represented personally appropriated and experienced truth. The same brethren declare that in the union to be accomplished "full liberty would be claimed for individuals on the extreme wing of each body to maintain their present views and practices." The spirit of tolerance could scarcely go further than this.

10. The Catholic Spirit. Charles Garrett was one of the best Wesleyan preachers of the last generation. He was a model to all Christians in his catholicity of sympathy with the whole church of Christ. He said at one time, "I have always felt that I belonged to the whole Church, and that if other members would not shake hands with me, it was their fault and not mine. I do not understand the

peculiarity of some people in this matter. I hate bigotry more than I hate drink, and that is a strong statement for me. I have tried to show my catholicity by helping as much as I could all the branches of the Church, and if I have not preached in the pulpit of every branch of the Church the fault has not been mine. I long for the time when everything that interferes with the free interchange of loving labor on the part of the Christian Church shall be swept away; when the ministers of Christ, as well as the people, will be found standing fast in one spirit, striving together for the faith of the Gospel."

George Müller was the apostle of faith. He was one of the saints of the last century. He labored always for the closer union and fuller co-operation of believers in Christ. He asked no one to give up his hard-won convictions as represented in the distinctive portions of his particular creed, but he pointed out that they did not touch the great foundations of the faith which all the churches hold in common. He said most sensibly:

"The foundations of our holy faith are so great, so momentous, and so precious, so altogether superabounding in comparison with anything else, that, if we lived more under their influence, and more valued and enjoyed

them, we should be constrained to love one another, to be knit together in love.

"We have the one, self-same Saviour: by faith in the Lord Jesus we are all introduced into the same family: through believing the gospel we become the children of God, and members of the same heavenly family. Now, if this were present to our hearts, that we all have one Father in heaven; one Saviour; are all bought by the same precious blood, and baptized by the Holy Ghost into one Body; are all walking the same road to heaven, and ere long shall all reach the same home—if all this were present to our hearts, I say, this or that difference of opinion would not separate or alienate us. There is a blessedness and sweetness connected with really holding the membership of the Body, and loving our fellow-believers, though we differ from them, that brings unspeakable joy to the soul."

Joseph Parker was a man of much the same mind. He said: "For my own part, I belong to all the denominations. I would not belong to any one denomination, because it does not give me room enough. I want the sky, not the ceiling; I want the whole firmament of the divine purpose, and not some little academic or sectarian construction of the divine purpose in creating and redeeming the world.

Therefore, belonging to all the denominations in the spirit of charity and appreciation, believing that no one denomination is the total church, I can see good in all the communions, and I see good where I strongly differ in opinion. But what is opinion? Where did it come from? Who has any exclusive freehold rights in opinion? We may be one in a great purpose, united in a sublime loyalty. We are of different politics, but we are of the same patriotism. So in the Church of Christ we have all these differences and conflicts, and yet sometimes, blessed be God! there are summer mornings so bright that we can see through all the conflict and acknowledge that the spirit of the living Christ is in every true heart, and that some people are of the Christian disposition who have not yet groped their way to the acceptance of the Christian dogma."

The United Church of Canada has published its doctrinal basis of union and in Article XV, on the "Church," it says: "We acknowledge one holy Catholic Church, the innumerable company of saints of every age and nation, who being united by the Holy Spirit to Christ their Head are one body in him and have communion with their Lord and with one another. Further, we receive it as the will of Christ that his church on earth should exist as a

visible and sacred brotherhood, consisting of those who profess faith in Jesus Christ and obedience to him, together with their children, and other baptized children, and organized for the confession of his name, for the public worship of God, for the administration of the sacraments, for the upbuilding of the saints, and for the universal propagation of the gospel; and we acknowledge as a part, more or less pure, of this universal brotherhood, every particular church throughout the world which professes this faith in Jesus Christ and obedience to him as divine Lord and Saviour." Methodists, Presbyterians, and Congregationalists have united on this platform. Could not all other churches do the same?

11. **Mutual Recognition.** The Dutch used to symbolize the necessity of living together in unity by this odd custom. They set two earthen pots afloat and put on each of them this inscription: "If we knock together, we sink together." It is time for the different creeds to quit their knocking together, and to say, with Robert Hall, "The man who is good enough for Christ is good enough for me;" and to agree with the apostle Peter that in every nation he that feareth God and worketh righteousness is accepted of God, and is good

enough to be accepted by them. A truly devout poet has sung:

> "One Master's peace the strife shall end,
> One Life our lives combine,
> And he that is my Master's friend
> Shall be a friend of mine."

Bishop Stillingfleet said, "For the church to require more than Christ himself did, or make the condition of her communion more than our Saviour did of discipleship, is wholly unwarranted." Yet that is what our divided churches have been doing for centuries now.

We know that our brethren are accepted of God and in fellowship with our Lord, and yet we bar them from our communion. In the advertisement of the Sunday services in the city paper we noticed two separated lists of Lutheran churches, and we asked the president of a Lutheran theological seminary why there were two lists instead of one and his answer was: "The churches of those two lists have absolutely nothing to do with each other. I would not be permitted to preach in any one of the pulpits of the churches in the list to which I do not belong, and if I were to present myself at their communion table they would order me away." Yet they were all Lutherans and they must have known that their brethren in the opposing churches were just as loyal

Lutherans as they were; and, if so, presumably just as good Christians as themselves.

We come to dislike our fellow Christians, and it is hard for us to believe that the Lord does not dislike them too; but he loves them. He blesses them with all spiritual blessings. He sustains them. He inspires them. He uses them. They preach him. They attract men to him. They glorify him by their lives and their labors. He is their way to eternal life and they are in constant fellowship with him. They rejoice in their realized union with him and they maintain unbroken communion with him. Yet we cut them off from communion with us. Why? They are good enough for Christ; why are they not good enough for us? What right have we to set up any barriers which he does not recognize? Ought not every one who is in communion with him to be worthy of communion with us as well?

Upon what questions are we divided at the present time? The apostolic succession? Have we any record that Jesus ever said a word which would indicate that he had any interest in that subject? The virgin birth? Did Jesus ever ask anyone to assert his belief in that fact before he could be accepted as a disciple? The inerrancy of Scripture? Did Jesus not abrogate more than one precept in

his Bible? Did Jesus insist upon these things as necessities to fellowship with him? If he did not, should we?

Diversities of belief do not bar Christians from him. Differing modes of worship do not preclude recognition by him. Different forms of ordination to the ministry have never cut off fellowship with the Master. Yet we have divided the churches over these things, and there are people among us still who cannot fellowship with those who do not agree with them in the statement of the faith and do not join with them in their manner of worship and do not recognize their particular historic episcopate. At the Council of Nicea the Emperor Constantine said to one of the Novatian bishops, "Acesius, take a ladder and get up to heaven by yourself." Gibbon records the incident and then adds with characteristic irony, "Most of the Christian sects have, by turn, borrowed the ladder of Acesius." Is it not about time for us to take down our little man-made ladders and live together in Christian fellowship in one great church here on God's green earth and so get ready to live together in comfort in God's great heaven?

Jerome told the Luciferians in his day that Christ was not so poor as to have a true church only in Sardinia. Bishop Sanderson

gave the bigoted Puritans of his time to understand that the people of God were not confined exclusively to a parlor or two in Amsterdam. There are true Christians in all the churches and in all the lands. Christians are those who follow Christ; and he never determined them by their connection with any church or their position in any apostolical succession or by their saying that they believed this or that or by their participation in any sacrament. He said, "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you." He said, "Whosoever shall do the will of my Father, the same is my brother and sister and mother." Whatever is sufficient for recognition in the kingdom of God ought to be sufficient for recognition and membership in the church on earth. Can we invent any requirements superior to those of the Master himself? If we cannot, ought we not to be satisfied whenever he is? All he asked was love to God and love to men. Is there a church anywhere some or all of whose members are distinguished for their love to God and their philanthropies, whose societies preach and practice love, whose services manifest and maintain love? Then we do not need to ask about its origin or its history or its creed. Its members, men and women, are our brothers and sisters in the Lord. That

church is a Christian church, and its members are Christian brethren, worthy of the recognition and fellowship of Christians everywhere.

At one time John reported to the Master that a certain man was casting out demons in the name of Jesus while he was not following with the disciples and they had forbidden him.[3] Jesus answered, "Forbid him not: for he that is not against you is for you." The churches too often have been like these disciples rather than their Lord. Whenever they accept any true minister of Jesus, whatever his particular creed may be; whenever they recognize any true worker in the cause, whatever the form of his ordination may have been; whenever they demand of any true laborer in the Kingdom only what Jesus himself would demand; whenever they cease setting up principles of exclusion which Jesus never commanded and represent the spirit of inclusion expressed in that statement, "He that is not against you is for you"; whenever they insist upon nothing except that upon which he insisted, they can easily unite in Christ.

[3] Luke 9. 49.

PART THREE: HELPS

CHAPTER I

HUMILITY

1. Individual. Humility will abjure all assumption of infallibility. Humility will recognize the possibility that others who differ with us in conclusions and creeds or in temperaments and tastes may be equally honest and equally liable to attain to the truth. Humility always will be looking for further light. The church always has been prone to look backward to the history and the prejudices of past times for the formulation of her faith when she ought to have been looking upward and forward for the guidance of the Spirit into new truth. A religion of the Spirit is a living, moving, adventurous religion. A church under the guidance of the Spirit will be freed from all bondage to tradition and the letter and will rejoice in its freedom to think for itself and determine for itself its relation to God and to man. We are to love God with all our minds as well as with all our hearts. We are to consecrate to him our best thinking as well as our best affections. We ought to think out for ourselves an intelligent creed of our own, one which can command

the homage of our own intellect, and which we can commend with confidence to all other thinking people.

That ought to be true of us first of all, that we are a thinking people. Then it ought to be equally true of us that we allow others to think for themselves, and if their conclusions differ with our own, we ought to abate no whit of our fellowship with them on that ground. Independence is desirable. Individualism is admirable, but it is not the function of individualism to maintain absolute isolation. It is its privilege to be a co-operating part of the corporate whole. Individual independence of thinking is not lost in the unity of the Spirit. Jesus was an individual, and yet he and the Father were one. The various churches and denominations would not lose their individuality and their independence of thinking in a corporate union any more than Jesus lost his individuality because of his union with the Father. We do not ask others to think as we think, and we do not ask others to join us, our church and our denomination, when we plead for organic union of all the churches. We simply ask that with all their different opinions on many matters, and with all the different customs and modes of worship and thought, they join with us in

realizing the One Universal Church of Christ in the world. We will think and let think in perfect cheerfulness and peace, not grudgingly and by way of concession but gladly and by way of confidence that the Spirit's guidance will be sufficient for our brethren as well as for us.

The spirit of John Wesley would make possible the maintenance of peace and harmony in a universal church. He said: "Condemn no man for not thinking as you think. Let every one enjoy the full and free liberty of thinking for himself. Let every man use his own judgment, since every man must give an account of himself to God. Abhor every approach, in any kind or degree, to the spirit of persecution. If you cannot reason or persuade men into the truth, never attempt to force a man into it." Those are golden words of wisdom, worthy of being laid to heart by every Christian. Do they not perfectly express the spirit of the Master himself? Origen fully exemplified this spirit. Even Cyprian held to it for the most part. He did not believe that those who were baptized outside of the church were baptized at all, but there were other bishops who recognized such baptisms, and for the sake of church unity Cyprian remained in communion with these, "judging

no man and separating no man from the rights of communion because he thought differently."

That is the only position for a sensible man to take. Every sensible man knows that he himself is not infallible and that therefore even where he thinks he is surest of the truth it is possible that his neighbor who differs with him may be partly right at least or may be approaching the same truth from a different point of view. At any rate, God has not made him the infallible possessor of the whole of the truth, and it is his duty to persuade rather than persecute those who have not attained to his illumination. It is a notorious fact that when a man is walking in a fog the atmosphere about him may seem relatively quite clear while those at a distance may seem to be enveloped in dense gloom, and yet the difference is simply one of distance and not at all of fog. The same fog envelops all alike. It only seems lighter near at hand.

2. Church. No church has a monopoly of infallible truth. No church creed expresses the whole of the truth. No church can claim to have the infallible interpretation of truth. We are all in the fog together. We have all made mistakes. We have all been in error. Is the Pope infallible and does the Roman Catholic Church hold and preach the whole

of saving truth? Pope Honorius was cursed as a heretic by all his successors for four hundred years. They did not recognize *him* as infallible. The Roman Catholics have added two dogmas to their list of infallible truths within our own lifetime, and for all we know they may add two more in the next generation. Every such addition proves that they did not hold all of the truth in their dogmas before the addition was made.

(1) Roman Catholic. What, then, is the proper attitude for the Roman Catholics to take in any suggestion of church reunion? The attitude of that devout scholar of their communion, Moehler, who declares that Catholics and Protestants "must stretch a friendly hand to one another and exclaim, in the consciousness of a common guilt, 'We all have erred—it is the church only which cannot err; we all have sinned—the church only is spotless on earth;'" and he adds, "This open confession of guilt on both sides will be followed by the festival of reconciliation." We cannot see how the church cannot err, if all of its members have erred, or how the church can be spotless, if all of its members have sinned; but we are perfectly ready to let that pass, or to allow it of some invisible and intangible and wholly imaginary and ideal church, and to

welcome the confession of fallibility and fault in the visible church in all of its branches; for it is on that basis alone that negotiations toward mutual recognition and reunion can begin.

(2) Anglican. The Anglican church has been most active in its efforts toward the reunion of Christendom. Is it a church without fault? Let one of its own sympathizers make answer: "Anglicanism, we know well, has sins and shortcomings enough to acknowledge and repent. By its coldness, at times when the currents of its spiritual life ran low, it has discouraged enthusiasm, it has failed to sympathize with new movements, it has been responsible, in part, for divisions which might have been avoided. By its too great emphasis on uniformity, its formality and fear of novelty, it has repressed too much the spirit of individual enterprise and the more emotional side of religious life. By its connection with the state, a connection not begun at the Reformation, but existing through its identification with the English race from its earliest beginnings, the life and work of the Church of England have been in these late days hampered and hindered. All this and more we must acknowledge."

What is the proper attitude for a church

like that to take in making any overtures toward reunion? The attitude which was taken by the General Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church initiating the movement for a World Conference on Faith and Order when it said, "With grief for our aloofness in the past, and for other faults of pride and self-sufficiency, which make for schism; with loyalty to the truth as we see it, and with respect for the convictions of those who differ from us, . . . we respectfully submit the following resolution." There is some hope for success in negotiations begun in that spirit. We must all be humble and repentant together. No one church can take a holier-than-thou attitude. No one church can claim to be infallibly right in its creed and ask all others to come over to it.

In the Encyclical Letter of Pope Pius XI, November 12, 1923, he stresses "the ecumenical unity of the Holy Church" which he rules and represents and then says, "Toward this unity we entreat all those who are separated from Us to turn. . . . Let them understand that this unity is to be sought not by controversy or contention so much as by the example and offices of a holy life . . . according to the bidding of the apostle, 'That ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of

one mind. Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory: but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.'" There is a glimmer of the light there, which, faithfully followed, may lead on to the perfect day.

The spirit of pride must give way to the spirit of conciliation. The assumption of absolute correctness of thought on all matters of faith must give place to the recognition of the possibility that another apprehension of the truth may be possible. We must be open to reason and persuasion. We must abhor and repudiate any approach to persecution. Persecution becomes possible only upon the assumption of personal infallibility, which none of us possess.

CHAPTER II

TOLERANCE

THROUGH the whole history of the church men have been persecuting other men simply because they would not or could not think exactly as they themselves thought. They have been ready to say: "He does not follow after us in his thinking. Therefore let him be cast out, and let an injunction be served upon him which will put him out of business." No universal church ever can be maintained on that basis. There must be absolute tolerance of opinion on all matters of faith.

The saints of the future united church will simply say concerning any man: "Is he a good man? Does he love God? Does he love his fellow men? Is he laboring for their good? Is he casting out demons in the name of the Lord? Then let him go his way in peace; for he is not against us, but for us. He is doing the same sort of work which we are trying to do, and he is living the same kind of life which we are trying to live; and what difference does it make if he does not see his way clear to follow after us in opinion? We honor the Master when we forbid him not, for it was the

Master who commended this spirit of toleration among his disciples."

1. **Intolerance Un-Religious.** Tolerance in religious belief is the very essence of Christianity. Intolerance is unchristian, unwise, unjust, unkind. Yet it is not uncommon, even among those who profess to be very pious people. They are so sure that *they* are going to heaven all right that they are sure that nobody can get to heaven except by their road. They are for violent measures against all who follow not after them. In the name of religion they hound their brethren, who are higher critics, out of the church. If they believe in one Isaiah and their brother believes in two, they brand him as a heretic, and are for driving him out of their pulpits and schools. If a belief in the virgin birth and the actual resurrection of Jesus from the dead seem essential to their faith, they immediately jump to the conclusion that the acceptance of these dogmas is just as essential to their brother's salvation as it is to their own; and if he hesitate about accepting these things, they condemn him and unchurch him at once, even though they see that he is just as religious as they are, and others may think that he is more so.

Religion was intended to bind man to God

and to bind men together; but they make their very religiousness a reason for their persecution of their equally religious brothers. Now, Benjamin Whichcote once said: "Religion requires concord. We cannot pretend to do that for religion itself, which is unnatural to religion, which is contrary to religion, and which religion forbids." It follows upon this fact that the zeal for orthodoxy which forbids differences of opinion in the Christian Church and among Christian brethren upon matters which do not affect the Christian character and the Christian life is in itself irreligious.

Jeremy Taylor wrote that remarkable treatise on the "Liberty of Prophesying," and in it he said: "It is not the differing opinions that is the cause of the present ruptures, but want of charity. . . . All these mischiefs proceed not from this, that all men are not of one mind, for that is neither necessary nor possible, but that every opinion is made an article of faith, every article is a ground of a quarrel, every quarrel makes a faction, every faction is zealous, and all zeal pretends for God, and whatever is for God cannot be too much. We by this time are come to that pass, we think we love not God except we hate our brother; and we have not the virtue of religion unless we persecute all religions

but our own: for lukewarmness is so odious to God and man, that we, proceeding furiously upon these mistakes, by supposing that we preserve the body, we destroy the soul of religion; or by being zealous for faith, or, which is all one, for that which we mistake for faith, we are cold in charity, and so lose the reward of both."

There is the natural history of the genesis of many an ardent persecutor of heretics in the Christian Church. A beginning zeal for religion, religion identified with orthodoxy, orthodoxy made to cover not only the essentials of the faith but also everything else that the self-styled orthodox may himself believe, including all questions of higher criticism and historical fact, with the assumption of personal infallibility in the whole field the arrogation of ecclesiastical authority to maintain it in its integrity and purity, heresy trials, church divisions, charity cold, religion dead. The professional heresy hunter is about the deadest man spiritually in the whole diocese.

It was against his whole tribe that Borden P. Bowne used to inveigh with his characteristic irony in these words: "Having themselves little knowledge and no intellectual interest, they desire to stand in the old paths, that is, the old formulas, or, still more accurately, the

old phrases. All that is needed for this is a competent and active ignorance and a belligerent conceit. With this furnishing they read out to their own satisfaction all modern science, modern history, modern sociology, modern political economy, and modern thought in general; and know not meanwhile that they are poor and miserable and blind and naked, and know nothing as they ought to know it. This has been so largely the character of self-styled orthodoxy, that one might almost have ground for a suit of slander or libel at being called orthodox." There is an element of exaggeration in that picture, but it represents the natural reaction of a modern scholar against those who are not willing to think and let think.

Father Edward Taylor of the Seaman's Bethel in Boston used to pray, "O Lord, save us from bigotry and bad rum; thou knowest which is worse." A persecuting bigot is the worst foe of the faith. In one of his homilies Chrysostom asks: "Was it ever seen that a sheep did persecute the wolf? No, but contrariwise. So also Cain persecuted Abel, but not Abel Cain. So Ishmael persecuted Isaac, not Isaac Ishmael. So the Jews did Christ, not Christ the Jews. So the heretics Christians, not Christians heretics. Wherefore by

their fruits we shall know them. He whom thou perceivest to take delight in persecution and bloodshed, is a ravenous wolf." To which Henry More appends the comment: "Persecution upon the account of Conscience is a manifest Evidence of Antichristianism. That Intimation of the Apostle is very apposite; He that was born after the Flesh, persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, Gal. 4:29. Which thing ought to strike Terror into a Man as often as he perceives any motions to Persecution arising in his Mind, such being manifest Indications of the Cainitish, Ishmaelitish, and Wolfish Nature, and a certain Sign that he belongs not to the Sheep-Fold of Christ."

A poor woman threw a fagot upon the fire which was burning up John Huss; and he recognized her as one of the saints. She probably was a saint, a poor, deluded, intolerant, persecuting saint, perfectly sincere and absolutely mistaken. There are many people like her in the church to-day. We must love them, bless them and pray for them. Some day their seemingly inborn incapacity to understand the truth held by us may be miraculously transformed into sufficient illumination for them to see that we are and ought to be brethren beloved.

2. Mutual Forbearance. Is there any good reason why Fundamentalists and Modernists may not live in peace and harmony together in the Christian Church? Is there any good reason why Christian insurgents and Christian standpatters may not belong to one ecclesiastical organization? Has anybody any right to read either of these wings of the organization out of the body to which they both profess and prove their loyalty?

Sometimes we have thought that every large body of people brought together into any organization, social, political, or ecclesiastical, would inevitably tend in time to resemble the two ends of a mule. There will be the conservative end and the radical end. Conservatism stands like the front end of the mule when it balks and is stubborn. It plants its two feet, immovable as Gibraltar. As a fool may be brayed in a mortar with a pestle along with bruised grain, yet will not his foolishness depart from him, even so it may be beaten with many stripes and it will be just as fixed in its tracks as before. Its eyes will be sleepy and uninterested; its look innocent and satisfied; its head hard and long, the throne of obstinacy and stubbornness incarnate. It has a pair of long ears which are seemingly deaf to all appeals to proceed on its journey but

which it uses to brush away the flies from its peaceful repose. The only movement perceptible in that end of the mule is the solemn blink of the eye and the periodic flap of the fly-brush.

The radical party is at the other extreme. When the front end of the mule seems to be most sleepy and most set in its ways, the other end may display the most unexpected and most extraordinary activity. It may be kicking at every old thing in sight with the rapidity of the lightning and the force of a thunderbolt. Now, both ends belong to the one mule. God has joined them together and no wise man would think of putting them asunder. We ask again, Why may not Fundamentalists and Modernists both have their place in the Christian Church? It would mean death to the church if either half of the body were taken away from it. Then it would seem to be wise for each of them to recognize the proper function of the other and to decide to go on in peace and harmony together.

Why do the conservatives in the church decide that the radicals ought to be put out of it? Because they believe that they alone have the truth and that the radicals are trying to prove that their long-cherished truth is antiquated and inadequate, and they also believe

that the old truth to which they cling ought to be maintained even at the price of the persecution and expulsion of scholars and saints from the church they serve and love, for they also believe that uniformity with their opinion concerning the truth is essential to church unity and to individual salvation. Nothing could be more mistaken than that. Uniformity of thought is neither possible nor desirable in the Christian Church.

3. **The Plain People.** The laity are beginning to realize that they are much alike. Their differences are not in matters essential to them. They say: "We are all of us Christians together. These differences are not vital to Christianity and therefore they ought not to divide Christians from each other. We all are disciples of Jesus. We all acknowledge him as Master and Lord. We all read and study the same Bible. We all can show the fruit of the Spirit in our lives. We have one God and Father, and that makes us brethren, and any schism among brethren becomes a sin. What if some of us believe in immersion and some do not? What if some of us believe in predestination and some of us do not? What if some of us believe in apostolic succession and some do not? These things have no vital relation to the salvation of men

or to the conquests of the cross in the foreign lands." The plain people have little or no interest in these things, and would soon forget about them if the leaders were willing not to stress them in their preaching for a while. We have people from all the denominations in the membership of our local churches. If their own denomination is not represented in the community, or the church of that denomination is too far away, or their personal friends are in the neighboring congregation, or they have a personal liking for the preacher, they pass from one denomination to another without hesitation and without any feeling of personal loss.

The fact of the case is that most people belong to a particular church not because of any intelligent and deliberate choice of its polity or doctrine but only because they happened to be born in a certain family or in a certain locality or in a certain social stratum, or because they have certain natural temperaments and tastes and certain social affinities. For the most part people are not interested in the things which divide the churches from each other, and for the most part the people are interested in anything and everything which tends to greater unity and efficiency in the work of the kingdom. They cannot fail

to see the evils of sectarianism and they are becoming impatient with the men and the institutions which block the way to reunion.

The people are getting ahead of the preachers at this point. While the leaders are sensitive about their orders and their dogmas the rank and file of the laity are pressing forward with a passion for brotherhood and unity which is acquiring the proportions of a revolution and which will in time either overwhelm the recalcitrant clergy or sweep them along on its crest.

4. The Young People. Youth is making its voice heard in this matter. It is a part of the Youth Movement so noticeable now all around the world. The Student Christian Movement in England has made this declaration: "We feel that the divisions of the church in our country are no longer tolerable, because they obscure that unity in Christ which we know to be more real than our differences. We ask for instant and courageous action. We want to serve a church which stands as one in fearless love of truth."

These young people represent the new generation. They see plainly that many of the reasons for division among the churches are absurd. Why are the Presbyterian churches and the Reformed churches in America di-

vided? Simply because the Presbyterians came from Scotland and the Reformed people came from Holland. That accident of past history ought not to keep apart churches with the same polity and doctrine. Why are there Methodist and Baptist and Presbyterian churches North and South here in America? Simply because of the division between the North and the South during the Civil War. That war was fought more than sixty years ago and the nation, North and South, has been united. It surely is time for the churches to forget the animosities of that unhappy period and to bury the hatchet and to resurrect their former brotherly love.

Truths may have been very vital at one time and it may have been heroic in the fathers to stand by their principles, but, now that the battle is over, shall their children perpetuate obsolete issues and where the fathers were courageous simply be obstinate, and where the fathers fought for fundamental rights now contend merely for place and power? The conscience of youth revolts against any such superimposed necessity. Living ten or twelve generations after separation has taken place, they begin to see that there has been much correction of abuses since that ancient day and that it is perfectly possible for the de-

scendants of the warring fathers to live in unity and peace. Multitudes among the youth are beginning to see that divisions are not essential to freedom of thought and that sects are apt to narrow one's vision and to hinder one's growth instead of helping to preserve and increase these things. They are looking forward to better things. They see no good reason why they should look much longer. They are asking with the impatience of youth and the insistence of their clear Christian conscience: "If eventually, why not now? We are to be one in heaven, why not upon earth?"

5. **Unity in Heaven.** There is a tradition that John Wesley dreamed that he stood at the gate of hell. Multitudes were passing in and Wesley asked the gatekeeper who they were.

"Did any Catholics go in there?"

"Plenty of them."

"Any Protestants?"

"Plenty of them."

"Any Presbyterians?"

"Plenty of them."

"Any Baptists?"

"Plenty of them."

Then Wesley asked in much trepidation, "Do any Methodists go in here?"

"Plenty of them," was the reply.

In his dream Wesley thought that he was immediately transferred to the gate of heaven, and he anxiously asked the gatekeeper there, "Are there many Methodists inside?"

"Not one," the answer came.

"Are there many Baptists?"

"Not one."

"Are there many Presbyterians?"

"Not one."

"Are there many Catholics?"

"Not one."

"Who are inside then?" he asked in much perturbation, and the angel answered, "There are only Christians here."

We believe that in all probability we will get along without denominational differences in heaven, and we believe that as God's will is done on earth as it is done in heaven these denominational divisions will be sure to disappear.

A variation of the Wesley story is that of the man who died and went to heaven and asked to be put with the Baptists, and he was told that there were no Baptists there.

"Well, put me with the Methodists then," said the new arrival.

"They are not here," repeated the keeper of the celestial gates.

"No Baptists and no Methodists in heaven?

That is a shock! Well, put me with the Presbyterians or the Episcopalians or the Roman Catholics, if you cannot do any better for me than that," said the neophyte.

"There are none of them here," was the answer.

The astonished man then went through the other denominations one by one and without any better success. Then he was reassured when the angel said, "My friend, representatives of all the denominations are here, but they are United Brethren now!"

Then the relieved man cried in ecstasy, "Thank God for heaven! Thank God for heaven!"

It will be something like a heaven on earth when all the Christian brethren on earth are united.

We drove through the country in Ohio and we came to a country crossroads, and there were three churches there on three of the corners. They were of almost exactly the same size and of the same style of architecture. There were no other buildings anywhere in sight. When we asked what these three churches were doing here in the country by themselves we were told that they were all Mennonite churches in the center of a Mennonite farming community but that they had

absolutely nothing to do with each other, and that if a member of one of the churches ever was seen to enter the door of either of the other churches he was excommunicated at once. A little farther down the road we met a farmer driving home with an empty hay-rack and we spoke to him in passing, and a moment later our host said to us, "I never saw that man before, as far as I know; but I can tell you to which one of those three churches he belongs, and I can tell that by the way he cuts his beard!"

They were all Mennonites but they were not united brethren. It surely is not too much to hope that the younger people of the next generation, growing up in Ohio, will not be satisfied with such divisions and will not allow the style of trimming the beard to be a bar to Christian brotherhood.

Several students from the Hook-and-eye communities of the Amish brethren in Illinois have come to our university and in all such cases the hooks and eyes have disappeared before they reached the senior year and they were wearing buttons on their clothes like other folks. The younger people will have more sense in many things than the older people have had. They have been trained in interdenominational student movements and in

the Y. M. C. A. and the Y. W. C. A., and they know the power and the joy there is in unsectarian fellowship. They will help to heal the many breaches in the Body of Christ, for they will be sure that the invisible unity of the spirit which may be maintained now in all the widespread legions of Christendom will become more tangible and more effective in proportion as the different Christian sects become organically one.

CHAPTER III

FORBEARANCE

We are not all alike. That means that we must bear with each other. We have different methods and tastes.

1. **Different Methods.** Some of us like to pray out of a book and some of us prefer to pray out of our hearts, not with phrases set for us by some saint or saints in the former times but with the petitions inspired by the particular needs of the moment. It has been said that as every man is born either a Platonist or an Aristotelian, so is every man by nature either a liturgist or an extemporanean. The liturgist shrinks from the familiarity of extempore prayer and frequently finds it vulgar and irreverent and offensive. The one accustomed to pour out all his soul's aspirations and needs in the simple language of a child talking with a father feels bound by a book, his liberty of speech and fervor of devotion all fettered by the printed liturgy before him. There ought to be room for both classes in the Christian Church. There must be room for both the formal and the free in a universal church, since they always will differ with each

other in their tastes and since they both have saints among them.

2. **Different Tastes.** Here is a blatant and bellowing, energetic and efficient evangelist. He fills the largest churches with his congregations, and if several churches unite in support of his meetings, he frequently has to have a special tabernacle built to accommodate the crowds who flock to hear him. He is sure that he is presenting the saving truth, and he is encouraged to think so by the scores and hundreds who "strike the sawdust trail" and loudly profess that their lives are reformed and their hearts are made new. He scoffs at half-empty churches, and he is sure that if all the preachers would follow his methods and adopt his theology, the world would be turned upside down in a short time.

He is utterly unconscious of the fact that there are in every community multitudes of people, many more than any of his tabernacles will hold, who abhor his methods and despise his theology and would go a great way to escape his preaching and yet are the steadfast supporters of every good work in the community and the reliable supporters of every church enterprise in the long intervals between the visits of intruding evangelists. They are the very salt of the earth and their

light burns steadily year after year, when many of the fireworks of the special revival services have burned out and been forgotten. There are just such differences among church people, and there always will be such differences; and the church must have room for both classes and for all kinds. If it is to be a universal church, it must countenance and cherish different tastes and temperaments and radically differing opinions.

Many of our differences are not so serious as they may seem to us. In Lord Bacon's essay on "Unity in Religion" he says: "A man that is of judgment and understanding shall sometimes hear ignorant men differ, and know well within himself that those which so differ mean one thing, and yet they themselves never would agree. And if it come so to pass in that distance of judgment which is between man and man, shall we not think that God above, that knows the heart, doth not discern that frail men, in some of their contradictions, intend the same thing, and accepteth of both?" Both the liturgist and the extemporanean, both the revivalist and the rationalist love God and would labor for the upbuilding of his kingdom. They must learn to live together in a universal church, not reviling each other but bearing with each other in love.

3. **Reviling.** We recall that story of Paul Louis Courier. He was treated to a bitter tongue-lashing by a certain French professor, and, listening to the tirade to the very end, he remarked: "I fancy he must be vexed. He calls me Jacobin, rebel, plagiarist, thief, poisoner, forger, leper, madman, impostor, calumniator, libeler, a horrible, filthy, grimacing rag-picker. I understand what he wants to say. He means that he and I are not of the same opinion, and this is his only way of putting it." Can anything be further from the leading of the Divine Spirit as revealed in both the Old and the New Testaments than this vilification and persecution of those who do not see things as we do?

4. **Bigotry.** There is no sin against the Divine Love so offensive as this, none which so deeply moves the divine resentment. In the Old Testament Scriptures we see a God who is merciful and gracious, easy to be entreated for any sin committed simply against himself, but who flames into fierce anger as soon as man sins against man. In the Scriptures of the New Testament we see that the God manifest in the flesh is ever ready to make excuse for his disciples when they are simply lacking in the sympathy or the loyalty due to him, but that he turns upon them with

his severest rebukes the moment they attempt to keep the little ones, the humble and despised, from him, or to forbid those who do not follow with them.

"And when men not only sin against men, but hate them, and not only hate them, but hate them for God's sake; not only cut them off from their sympathy and fellowship, but cut them off for the glory of God; when they not only commit the sin most offensive to him, but commit it under cover of zeal for his service, we can well understand that his anger against them should be fierce and bitter and well-nigh implacable. They cannot love the Father whom they have not seen, unless they love the brothers whom they have seen; and therefore they reach the very climax of iniquity and hypocrisy when they hate the brethren out of love to God. There is a bigotry of Ignorance, but there is also the more deadly bigotry of would-be Illumination." These may seem like strong words; but they are as true as they are strong.

5. Hate. In the beginning it was said of the Christians, "See how they love each other." Since the first great schism in the church it has been said of the Christians again and again, "See how they hate each other!" One of the crusading armies was in-

duced by the Venetians to turn aside from its original plan of the recovery of Jerusalem and to attack Constantinople. For centuries Constantinople had been the bulwark of Christendom and of civilization; but the soldiers of the cross burned the city and desecrated its Christian cathedral, where they conducted a blasphemous mockery of the Greek Orthodox service and made a dancing girl dance on the High Altar. The Greek church never forgave that outrage; and when the time came for a choice between Mohammedan rule and that of Roman Catholics they accepted the Moslem rule without hesitation as preferable to that of "the Latin dogs." It was that schism between the Roman and the Greek churches which made possible the rise of the Turkish power and all the infamies with which that power has been connected.

6. Wars. Some of the most atrocious wars in European history have been wars between Christians. The Hussite wars, the Netherland wars against the Spanish rule and the Spanish Inquisition, the Thirty Years' War in Germany, the war between king and Parliament in the days of Cromwell, the religious wars of Scotland, the atrocities committed in Ireland, found their chief incentive in the hatred which Christians had for each other.

The fires of Smithfield, the massacre of Saint Bartholomew, the Gordon riots were the outcome of religious animosities. These animosities were fostered by church schisms, and the schisms were caused largely by differences in belief. There could be no fellowship between those who differed on some incidentals, although in all the fundamentals they were one. The breaking of the fellowship led to lessened love and gradually love turned into hate, and hate led to all the horrors of persecution and ruthless war.

7. **Separation.** Early in the nineteenth century a separatist church was formed in Scotland, the central object of which was to insure and perpetuate a perfect unity of belief and opinion among the separatists themselves. To assure such blessed continuity of unanimity in deciding upon conduct and creed, the rule was agreed upon that whenever a vote was taken on any subject requiring church action, all persons voting in the minority were by that fact self-excommunicated from the church body. The majority was to represent the unanimous remainder of the church in each such case. We know how that experiment came out. At last one old man and his wife were left to represent the sect; and in answer to an inquiry the old woman said, "There

are only me and my man John left, and I am not oversure on John."

The Beatitudes do not read, "Blessed are those only who are baptized by immersion. Blessed are those only who never dance or play cards. Blessed are those only who vote the Republican ticket. Blessed are those only who never study their Bible critically and who never come to any conclusions differing from the traditional views concerning it. Blessed are the heresy-hunters alone, for they shall preserve the conservatism of the church." On the contrary, one of the Beatitudes reads, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God."

8. **One Goal.** Orthodoxy always has been considered to be right thinking; and right thinking has been tacitly assumed to be like thinking. If a certain class of men are orthodox, then all who differ with them are heterodox; but in all such thinking and definition we are forgetful of the fact that what may be right from one point of view may not be right from another point of view, and that ultimate truth may be arrived at from many different directions. If we wish to reach California, the land of sunshine and flowers, we can cross the continent by any one of several railroad lines. They will provide for us equally well

and they will bring us to our destination in about the same length of time. Just so if we wish to get to heaven we can go by a broad-gauge or a narrow gauge line; we can travel in all plainness and simplicity in a day coach or a tourist car, or we can travel in all the luxury and the exclusiveness of a private compartment in a Pullman; we can go in the quiet of a Quaker meeting or in all the noise of a Salvation Army Big Go with brass-band accompaniment; we can travel in all the Puritan plainness of a country meetinghouse or in all the architectural and liturgical luxury of an Episcopalian cathedral. We can reach heaven by any evangelical route. The man who is true to the teaching of any Christian church may be sure of reaching his desired destination.

9. **Meet at Top.** We remember those two Scotchmen who lived, the one on the one side and the other on the other side of a double house, and each man had to keep his side of the roof well thatched. They belonged to rival churches and at one time when ecclesiastical controversy was at its height the neighbors reached the point where they would no longer speak to each other. One day they were both working on the roof and when they reached the top they found themselves face to face.

They could not very well run away, and Andrew finally took off his cap and said, "Johnny, you and me, I think, hae been very foolish to dispute as we hae done aboot our kirks, until we hae clean forgot his will aboot oursels. Whatever's wrang, it's perfectly certain it never can be right to be unneighborly, uncivil, unkind; in fact, to hate one anither. Na, na, that's the deevil's wark, and na God's. Noo, it strikes me that maybe it's wi' the kirk as wi' this house. Ye are warkin' on one side and me on tither, but if we only do our wark weel, we will meet at the top at last. Gie us your hand, auld neebor."

In all probability those who have been working at different sides of the same religious problems and possibly never come within sight of each other's position through the whole period of their strenuous labor will be surprised to find that they meet face to face at the top at last. In all probability when we climb high enough to sit down together in the heavenly places in Christ we will find ourselves equally acceptable to him, and in his presence we will find it easy to be at peace. Christ is the center for all Christians. There may be many radii leading out to the circumference in every direction, but as Christians labor along these various lines of endeavor

toward Christ, as they draw nearer and nearer to him they inevitably draw nearer and nearer to each other. There is a twofold approach: the nearer to Christ the nearer to all of their brethren. We need to agree only in our common loyalty to our Lord. Let us grant to all our brethren the same liberty of thought and of conscience which we demand for ourselves, even though we know that that means that they will not come to the same conclusions we have reached. They cannot honestly do that any more than we can honestly come to their views. We will anathematize no one for his creed, if he is fully persuaded in his own mind and he displays the Christian graces in his life.

That is the only basis upon which a universal church can be founded; that of the tolerance of many differing beliefs. The Church of Christ is intended to be a universal church, and we must make room in it for many different conceptions of the truth. We must recognize the fact that the possession and profession of the truth as we see it is not essential to any other man's salvation, at least not the possession of the whole of it. If the Arminian theology is right, then the old-fashioned Calvinistic theology was radically and irredeemably wrong. They could not both be

true, because in their essential characteristics they were so absolutely and irreconcilably opposed to each other. Yet both Calvinists and Arminians were saved. Good and thoroughgoing Calvinists and good and thoroughgoing Arminians had enough truth in common to save them, and where they differed with each other they both believed they had the truth and they both believed that they were loyal to the truth and they both knew that they loved the truth and were ready to live and to die for it. That is what saved them.

CHAPTER IV

APPRECIATION

We need to realize three things: first, that we are to be the evangelists of the nations and, second, that when the nations are evangelized the universal church of Christ will be neither national, American, European, African, or Asian, nor denominational, Roman Catholic, Greek Orthodox, Episcopalian, Methodist, Baptist, or Presbyterian, and then, third, that it will be something much larger and better than these. In the Concordat between the Congregationalists and the Protestant Episcopalians this principle was clearly recognized. The signers of that Concordat were sure that their different churches had something to bring into a united church and that the united church would be the better for their differing gifts. They said:

"We agree to acknowledge that Christian churches not accepting the episcopal order have been used by the Holy Spirit in his work of enlightening the world, converting sinners, and perfecting saints. They came into being

through reactions from grave abuses in the church at the time of their origin, and were led in response to fresh apprehensions of divine truth to give expression to certain necessary and permanent types of Christian experience, aspiration and fellowship, and to secure rights of Christian people which had been neglected or denied.

"No Christian community is involved in the necessity of disowning its past; but it should bring its own distinctive contribution not only to the common life of the church, but also to its methods of organization. Many customs and institutions which have been developed in separate communities may be preserved within the larger unity. What we desire to see is not grudging concession, but a willing acceptance of the treasures of each for the common enrichment of the united church."

1. A Richer Christianity. The united church will not represent a reduced Christianity but a richer Christianity. If each church is a Christian church, there will be more Christianity in the united church than in any one of the churches uniting. The union will be, not one of compromise and concession, but one of comprehension and completion. As those ministers representing various churches

in India and endeavoring to form a union comprising them all said in their preliminary statement, "We aim not at compromise for the sake of peace, but at comprehension for the sake of truth." There need be no surrender of anything vital to Christianity, but united Christendom will have all that is true and good which each and all of the uniting churches can contribute. There is a Russian proverb which says that the Romanist service appeals to the eye, the Protestant to the intellect, and the Orthodox to the heart. Without granting any absolute truth to that proverb one can see that these churches do differ with each other in their gifts and graces and that each has something to contribute to the fullness and the completeness of the Christian life.

The united church would have both Marthas and Marys in it. It would have room for the Quaker meeting with its simplicities and for the Roman pageant with its ceremonials. It would unite the eloquent preaching of the Protestants and the universal philanthropy of the Roman Catholics and the mystic devotion of the Greek Orthodox. Do Protestants think that they can receive nothing from these older and greater Christian churches?

2. **The Greek Church.** The church music

of the Russian Church is said to be the best in the world. The Russian mission was the greatest achievement of the Greek Orthodox Church. That church has the best tradition of corporate worship in church history. It has one Liturgy, used everywhere, reproduced in a hundred different languages. That Liturgy is not offered by the priest alone, but by the priest and the people together. Under its inspiration great saints have been developed, such as the heroic missionary Nicolai, who founded the church in Japan and with never more than two or three priests to help him at any time built up a membership of twenty-five thousand converts in his own lifetime and did so much good and was so well liked by the Japanese government that he was the one Russian subject permitted to remain in Japan during their war with Russia.

There are one hundred and fifty millions of Christians in this Greek Church. It is an evangelical church but not a Protestant church. It is a Catholic church but not a Roman Catholic church. The Church of England was once united or associated with the Church of Rome; the Greek Church never was. It rejects the claims of the papacy just as emphatically as we do. It witnesses to the fundamentals of the Christian faith just as

clearly as we do. It has developed for centuries in almost complete isolation from the controversies which have disturbed our Western churches. It has been hard hit by the revolution in Russia. It is chastened in spirit, repentant for its shortcomings in the past, and anxious to be a real help to the people. It is disposed to the reunion of Christendom and its regeneration into a spiritual power. It has accepted gratefully financial aid and ecclesiastical encouragement from the Methodists of America. It has officially, through the Patriarch of Constantinople and the Patriarch of Jerusalem, recognized the validity of Anglican orders. Its churches have welcomed Church of England clergymen to its offices of worship and its own priests have taken part in the offices of worship of the Church of England. Can any one doubt that this Eastern church could contribute much to the richness and completeness of the Christian life in a united Christendom? We need its simplicity and tenacity, its mysticism and magnificence.

3. **The Roman Church.** What shall we say about the Roman Catholics? They seem to be the most hopeless section of the Christian Church, as far as any negotiations or concessions or considerations looking toward a re-

union of Christendom are concerned. Shall we be content to denounce them for their errors and leave them in their sins? Shall we say, "Romanism robs Christ of his kingly office, by exalting the Pope to his throne; it robs him of his priesthood in the sacrifice of the mass; it robs him of his power as mediator by substituting Mary; it robs him of his prophetical office by substituting the teachings of an infallible church; it robs God the Spirit of his peculiar work as Sanctifier by attributing the power of conferring graces to its own ordinances; and it robs God the Father of his prerogatives by assuming the power of justifying and pardoning men."

What an indictment that is! One would think that an institution which was guilty of such heinous crimes would have been blotted from the face of the earth long ago! One would think that the wrath of God would have been manifested against it and that it would have perished by the weight of its own corruption! Yet it seems to flourish strangely still. One might even suspect from its evident vitality and philanthropy and devotion that God's favor rested upon it in a peculiar measure. Is it possible that God loves the Roman Catholic Church, instead of hating it? Is it possible that he owns it by the bestowal

of great grace upon many of its members and that he would be glad to see it a part of the holy catholic church to be realized upon this earth in the future days?

Can anyone fail to see what contribution to a united Christendom the Roman Catholic Church could make? It is the mother church of all our Western Christianity. We are all deeply in debt to her. We know that the church was the only guardian and depository of learning through the Dark Ages. We know that some of the most precious of our manuscripts would have perished utterly if they had not been carefully preserved and lovingly copied in the monasteries. We know that the church was the one power which stood for justice and mercy in the barbarous times. We know that it saved the peoples again and again from the tyrannies and the cruelties of barons and kings. Its power of excommunication and the handling of the keys to eternal life and eternal death terrorized their savage wills and made them amenable to persuasion and reason.

It represents one of the largest and most efficient organizations of Christians in the world to-day. It has more missionaries than all the Protestant missionaries combined. It has had marvelous suc-

cess in its missions. It has had the most heroic devotion among its missionaries. In Korea its first priest and first bishop and first convert were all martyred, but it went on to final victory. In Japan it made so many converts that the government began to be afraid of its influence politically, and all of its missionaries were banished, and a law was passed that every professing Christian should be condemned to death by torture; and, without priest or Bible or any help from the outside, in the face of persecution and death, those loyal converts to the Christian faith maintained the existence of their Christian church for two hundred years. When Japan was again opened to missionary effort it was one of the surprises of the Protestant missionaries then first arriving that these Roman Catholic Christians had been in Japan for two centuries, and that they had maintained their faith in such purity.

We know how the Roman Catholic Church succeeds in gaining and maintaining a remarkable loyalty among its people. We envy them their financial efficiency which is based upon the readiness of all their members, rich and poor, to make sacrifices for their religion. We wish our people would feel the necessity of church attendance as the Roman Catholics

do. We have visited Protestant church after Protestant church in hot summer weather in one of our American cities and found only a handful of worshipers in each and at the same hour the Roman Catholic churches were crowded to the doors and a large percentage of their congregations were men. We know that the Roman church has been a bulwark of morality and decency in its own population. We know how it has taught its children the elementary duties of the Christian life. We know how its practice of confession has kept alive the sense of sin among its adherents, when that sense has seemed almost to die out in modern society. We know the sacredness in which they hold the marriage bond. We know that among them marriage is for life and divorce is very difficult if not impossible; and we know what a menace to decency easy divorce in our modern life has become.

We wonder at the multitude of priests and nuns which the church commands for its service, and we know that many of these priests practice uncomplainingly such self-denial as puts to shame some of the self-indulgence in our Protestant ministry, and we know that many of these nuns live spotless lives of saintly devotion, following in the footsteps of the Master and patterning their daily disci-

pline upon the model of the New Testament. We have seen them in the slums of the great cities and in the wilds of foreign lands, giving up their lives to doing good among those who never could repay them in any material way, and, as far as we could see, with no other possible purpose than to do the will of God and to bring his kingdom upon this earth.

The Roman Catholic Church knows how to build great cathedrals in which the poor feel at home. The pomp and splendor, the magnificence of marble and gold, do not repel the humble folk. They find comfort in these things in the enjoyment of which they have an equal part and which witness to the honor and glory of Him whom they worship in absolute fraternity and equality with all of their fellows. We have been in a little Roman Catholic church in California where services were held only on alternating Sundays and where the priest was an Italian and in the congregation of one hundred people we found Americans, English, Irish, Scotch, Chinamen, Mexicans, Indians, and Negroes worshiping in perfect equality together. In no one of the Protestant churches of that town could we find anything like that catholicism, cosmopolitanism, and democracy.

The haphazard methods of our divided

Protestantism seem contemptible and weak before the universal discipline and order of the Roman Church. Has the church abuses? Of course it has; and so have we. Has it the power of reformation within itself? Of course it has; just as much as we. Gregory VII was one of the greatest reformers who ever lived. Some of the founders of the monastic orders, Ignatius Loyola, Saint Francis, Saint Dominic, were innovators and reformers as well as saints; and they carried the church with them. They were canonized and not burned. The church which canonizes saints like these gives evidence of its own desire for purification. It appeals to the historic imagination. It appeals to the poetic and æsthetic emotions. It ministers to all classes of men without discrimination. It attaches the unlettered and the learned to itself with equal devotion. It has multitudes of communicants who are living godly lives and are just as good Christians as the world contains. The Roman Catholic communion could contribute much to a united church.

4. **The Protestant Church.** Has Protestantism anything to contribute? If the great schism between Protestantism and Roman Catholicism is to be justified at all, it surely has. It could bring into the united church a

freedom and elasticity Roman Catholicism now lacks. The uniformity of the Roman communion is despotically enforced. Protestants would bring into the united church an intelligent liberty of conscience with a tolerant love of all brethren in the faith which would admit of all diversities of organization and administration and customs and methods which were consistent with a good and useful Christian life. Many Protestant churches give weight to personal experience as over against the sacramentarian emphasis in many of the Catholic churches. The united church might preserve a better balance between the two. It would be easy for us as Protestants to make out a long list of our own superiorities as compared with other great bodies in the Christian Church. It will be more modest and more courteous to leave the members of these bodies to discover these superiorities for themselves. Our purpose in this chapter is to suggest that mutual appreciation may be a first step toward any genuine desire for unity, and we are ready to rest our own case upon the great contribution which the variety and liberty of the Protestant bodies would bring to the enrichment of the one holy catholic church.

Protestantism has failed to convert the

world. Roman Catholicism has failed. The Greek Orthodox Church has failed. Would not a united church be victorious where our present churches have failed adequately to meet the problems and the possibilities in the sinning and unsaved world? We all have truths which ought to be conserved. In our isolation and division these truths tend to disproportionate development and we all become unconsciously more or less one-sided. For the last five hundred years there has been only one Pope who was not an Italian. That Pope was an Englishman, and more or less of a failure. What warrant can there be for a church which claims to be universal in its interests and its outlook to confine its election of its supreme head to the Italians? Is there no wisdom and devotion anywhere else worthy of this honor? Are their finest specimens of saintliness and sense confined to Italy? Is it not inevitable that a church whose government is restricted to one little country will in the course of the centuries become somewhat top-heavy with Italian influence?

The same thing is true of the rest of us. Denominationalism tends to lopsidedness. Isolation fosters disagreeable peculiarities. The old maid and the old bachelor are apt to

be cranky and opinionated and selfish and pampered. The longer they live the harder they find it to live with other people. The give-and-take of family life smooths down individual angularities and the longer a Christian family lives together the more likely its members are to think alike and act alike and look alike. They learn from each other and they bear with one another, and so they come to be large-minded and large-hearted. They profit by the contact of different types of minds and of tastes, and they mutually educate and discipline each other.

It would be likely to be so in the one great family of the universal Church of Christ. We would share in each other's gifts and graces. We would enjoy fellowship with different types of Christian experience. We would find ourselves enriched in many ways. We would enter into a larger and fuller life. There would be apt to be added interest and stimulus in Christian activity. There probably would be less of disproportion and narrowness of vision. There probably would be more symmetry in Christian thinking. Unbalanced development might give way to continuous and congruous growth. Fragmentary faith might be replaced by the fullness of the faith. Partial truth could become perfect truth. Then

the holy catholic church, one church in all the lands, could sing and pray:

"One sole baptismal sign,
One Lord below, above,
Zion, one faith is thine,
One only watchword—love;
From different temples though it rise,
One song ascendeth to the skies.

"Head of thy church beneath,
The catholic, the true,
On all her members breathe,
Her broken frame renew;
Then shall Thy perfect will be done,
When Christians love and live as one."

Milton compared the division of the church into sects to the crime of Typhon in the Egyptian myth, who cut the body of Osiris to pieces. In the same way he says of the sects: "They took the virgin Truth, hewed her lovely form in a thousand pieces, and scattered them to the four winds. From that time ever since the sad friends of Truth, such as durst appear, imitating the careful search that Isis made for the mangled body of Osiris, went up and down, gathering limb by limb, as they could find them. And we have not yet found them all, Lords and Commons, nor ever shall do so till her Master's second coming: he shall bring together every joint and member, and shall mold them into one immortal feature of love-

liness and perfection." Each of the sects has its portion of truth to contribute to the perfect truth. No one of the sects can claim to have the whole of the truth. A united church could search with courage and hope for the fullness of the truth.

5. **The United Church.** Such a church would be supernational and superdenominational in its organization. It would have a head, whom some might call a Pope while others simply recognized him as a duly elected Bishop or Archbishop or Primate or Patriarch or Head of the Executive Board. Every Russian priest is called a Papa or Pope. That title means nothing more than Father and every Roman priest is called a father. No one need be afraid of that title as long as it represents not imperial or autocratic but delegated and democratic power. Let such a duly elected presiding officer be the recognized head of the church, in regular succession from either Peter or the Lord, and his supreme jurisdiction would have the efficiency of a single and unified leadership while the office would have something of the elasticity of Protestant enterprise. It would combine the autocracy of episcopacy with the democracy of the Congregationalists and the Presbyterians and the Baptists. Its authority could be limited to

purely executive functions with possibly the right of initiative and veto in legislative matters, such as some civil executives have. The absolute despotism of the present papacy could be constitutionally modified until it became the proper executive servant of the universal church. Melanchthon stood ready to recognize the authority of the Pope if the latter would abdicate his *jus divinum*. All the modern world might submit to the authority of a Pope democratically elected and constitutionally controlled. Surely, the members of the Mar Thoma Syrian Church were right in protesting against the growing exclusive claims of the present Papacy and then adding, "Nevertheless, we feel to-day it is incomprehensible to think of perpetuating the division of the Church of Christ, and shattering its strength over a contention about a word."

The word "Pope" can be robbed of all its terrors by united constitutional action. Bishop Anderson of Chicago says, "A constitutional head is not out of harmony with democracy nor with vital Christianity. A constitutional papacy makes no break with the past, contains no prejudice against the future, is not inimical to democracy; and it is not practicable to eliminate it from a world-wide Christian fellowship."

Thomas Jefferson used to declare that he learned the principles of his democracy from his observation of a little Baptist church in his vicinity. A writer in the early part of the last century lamented the fact that Methodism had taught the working classes the secret of organized effort. He believed that the Methodist classmeeting had been the forerunner of the trades-unions. What would he have said could he have foreseen the time when a labor government would be in control in Great Britain under a constitutional monarchy? Would he have thought that Methodism finally had succeeded in ruining the nation?

American democracy is in debt to Baptist independence and individuality. The labor movement around the world is in debt to the Wesleyan Revival. Both modern politicians and modern labor leaders may be unconscious of these debts, yet modern society may be in truth the product of these unrecognized influences. The British Empire is a combination of a constitutional monarchy, representing all the traditions of the past, with a practical democracy, groping its way toward all the ideals of the future. Why may not the united church be a combination of papal and episcopal prerogatives with all the liberty of thought and freedom of conscience characteristic of

the independent churches? If it can be made to work efficiently and satisfactorily in the political world, why may it not work just as well in the religious world?

The United States of America is a union of States with many separate and conflicting interests, and yet their union gives them a single loyalty and dominant position in the world of to-day. Could not a universal church be formed in the same way, with many different denominations with different temperaments and customs united in one superdenominational loyalty which would make them masters of the world? We meet now in great General Assemblies and General Conferences and Conventions and Associations and Convocations. It would be perfectly possible to have an Ecumenical Council of all Christians constituting the supreme court of Christendom. Church Unity will necessitate unity of jurisdiction. The Roman Catholic Church to-day claims to be an ecumenical church, exercising authority over all the nations, and with appellate jurisdiction regulated by canon law in full recognition. What the Roman Catholic Church already claims to have done the Holy Catholic Church of all Christians in all the lands may do.

APPRECIATION

During the course of the Great War there were many saintly souls in all the churches who wondered if the time would not come when all Christians would so feel their brotherhood in church and Christian bonds that they would be able to rise above petty national rivalries and jealousies and in one supernational Christian loyalty and love bid war to cease upon this earth. When a holy passion for doing the will of God takes supreme possession of every Christian heart, we will forget the things which divide us and in the unity of the Spirit and in the bond of peace we will be willing to labor as one body to capture the world for Christ. Then patriotism will be subordinated to international good will. No man will say any longer, "My country, right or wrong," but every man will say, "My country, if she is right; and if she is wrong, to make her right, by bringing her into line with the revealed will of God in my higher loyalty to his church and to him."

CHAPTER V

LEADERSHIP OF THE SPIRIT

THIS supernational and superdenominational loyalty never will be achieved except in loyalty to the supreme leadership of the Spirit of God. If men ever come together, it will be as brethren in Christ. If all religious men ever are united in one body, it will be because they recognize in each other the possession of the one Spirit of holiness and peace.

1. **Toward Unity.** National types first came into collision in the Christian Church at that Jerusalem Council and there were just as great differences of opinion separating the Jewish and the Gentile Christians in that Council assembled as there are separating the Roman Catholics and the Protestants of today. How did the church escape a schism in that first collision of beliefs? It was by the recognition of the fact that God had granted the same Spirit to them all. Peter told how "God . . . made no distinction between us and them," "giving them the Holy Spirit, even as he did unto us."[1] Paul and Barnabas

[1] Acts 15. 8-9.

rehearsed "what signs and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles through them."[2]

The prejudices of the centuries, the traditions of the Fathers, the divinely sanctioned institutions of the past all went by the board in the clear evidence of the presence of the Spirit; and the church avoided shipwreck and schism by contenting itself with the one unity of the Spirit as proved by the cleansing of the heart and the saving of souls. Spiritual purity and evangelistic success were sufficient guarantees of the presence and power of the Spirit of God; and all other differences could be disregarded in this fundamental unity.

If the same principle had been maintained in the whole of church history, how many schisms might have been avoided! As this principle comes to be more and more clearly recognized as the only true Christian principle of procedure in the case of differences of opinion and custom, how many of the present schisms may be healed! Here is the most hopeful line of approach to a reunited Christendom; not in the formulation of revised and compromise creeds, not in joint conventions or any artificially manufactured schemes, but in the general outpouring of the Spirit of God

[2] Acts 15. 12.

in which the hearts of men will be bound together in love and peace, and they will find themselves in perfect spiritual fellowship and accord without any planning at all. It was Chrysostom who said: "As in a body it is the Spirit which holds all together, and makes that to be a unity which consists of different limbs, so it is in the church. For the Spirit was given for this purpose, that he might unify those who differ in race and variety of habits."

A captain of industry once said: "There are problems in the spiritual and social world which are like some of our metals: altogether refractory to low temperatures. They will melt only with great heat, and there is no other possibility of melting them." It may be that we have attacked this problem of the reunion of all the churches in too low a temperature. It may be that only the baptism of the Holy Spirit and of fire will be sufficient to bring about the desired fusion of hearts and interests which will melt us together and make us one in Christ Jesus.

The baptism with the Spirit makes us all brethren in Christ. That was Peter's one test in the matter of fellowship and recognition. "If then God gave unto them the like gift as he did also unto us, when we believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I, that I could

withstand God?"[3] Why may not we have the same confidence in the Spirit's direction and decision that Peter had? Mutual recognition of the Spirit's presence would bring all members of the living church together. Let us trust the leadership of the Spirit more fully in the future than we have in the past, and he will lead us more and more toward church unity. *The church filled with the Spirit will be a living and moving and changing church.*

2. **Toward Truth.** The Spirit leads forward into more and more of truth. The church filled with the Spirit never will be satisfied to rest upon its past history; it will be looking forward to newer revelations and greater conquests than it yet has known. If our differentiations are to be found in historic memories, let our union be found in present realities of fellowship and filling with the one Spirit of God. Truth has been given us all in the past; but not in its entirety. The church filled with the Spirit will not be content with ancient formulations but will claim and exercise the right to express its faith in the intelligible language of its own day. The Spirit who helped the church in ages past to formulate its creeds will help us to restate

[3] Acts 11. 17.

them now in the light in which we live. He will increase our knowledge with our faith and love.

3. **Toward Adventure.** The Spirit of the Lord is a spirit of liberty. Those who follow the leading of the Spirit have a great sense of freedom and adventure. The church filled with the Spirit will be full of innovations. It will not be tied to any creedal hitchingpost; it always will be faring forward on the way to new fields and new experiences. It will not be constrained and repressed; it will be exuberant and adventurous. It will be full of life and the vigor of life, and life always is incalculable. The exact sciences have to do with things which are dead and can be relied upon to stay in their places. One and one make two; but one man who is Martin Luther and another man do not make two Martin Luthers. The one man may be led by the Spirit of God into reformations the other man supposed to be impossible. A church filled with the Spirit will welcome new developments and will not be afraid of new situations. It will not be timid and cautious but brave and enterprising.

The Lambeth appeal to all Christian people for the reunion of Christendom said, "This means an adventure of good will and still more

of faith, for nothing less is required than a new discovery of the creative resources of God. To this adventure we are convinced that God is now calling all the members of his church." The Spirit's call is a call to unity. Let the people hear the Spirit speak in the present and they will be apt to forget traditions and precedents which lay cold and repressing hands upon the demands of the new age and the needs of the living and growing kingdom of God. The coming of the Spirit is like the coming of the spring. The dead leaves fall away and the new buds appear. The chill of the past is forgotten in the cheer of the present and the promise of the future days. The time of the singing of birds is at hand when the new age of faith has dawned on the world. The organic union of the churches will be an adventure of faith and good will, and it will come about only as the churches surrender themselves to the leading of the adventurous Spirit of God.

4. In Hymns. The church already is united in the use of its devotional hymns. We sing

> "Jerusalem, the golden,
> With milk and honey blest,"

or that other hymn so like it,

> "O Paradise, O Paradise,
> Who doth not crave for rest?"

without thinking of objecting to them or hesitating to use them because they were written by Roman Catholics. We prize those precious expressions of our own devotion and love,

"Nearer, my God, to Thee,
Nearer to Thee!"

and

"In the cross of Christ I glory,
Towering o'er the wrecks of time,
All the light of sacred story
Gathers round its head sublime,"

even though we know that both of those hymns were written by Unitarians.

We sing those Baptist hymns,

"The morning light is breaking,
The darkness disappears,"

and

"My country, 'tis of thee,"

and that Congregational hymn,

"I love thy kingdom, Lord,
The house of thine abode,"

and that Presbyterian hymn,

"Stand up, stand up for Jesus,
Ye soldiers of the cross,"

with just as much pleasure and fervor as that beautiful Universalist hymn,

"One sweetly solemn thought
Comes to me o'er and o'er,"

or that Methodist hymn,

"Jesus, Lover of my soul,
Let me to thy bosom fly."

The fact of the case is that our present hymn-books furnish a practical demonstration of the fundamental unity of the Spirit in the Church of Christ to-day.

One amusing illustration of this fact is to be found in the use of that hymn which originally was written by a Highchurchman for the exclusive use of the Established Church, to emphasize its superiority in its historic and organic unity to all the multiplied sects of the dissenters.

"*We* are not divided,
All one body *we*,"

and now all the dissenters sing it with all the fervor imaginable as if it belonged to them as much as to anybody else in the world, appropriating it to the uses of world-wide Christendom and utterly forgetting its originally intended exclusiveness.

"Like a mighty army
Moves the church of God;
Brothers, we are treading
Where the saints have trod;
We are not divided,
All one body we,
One in hope and doctrine,
One in charity."

If they have broadened out the doctrine a little bit, we trust that they have broadened out the charity even more. Our hymn books ignore all sectarian divisions. The Christian Church is one in its songs.

5. In Prayers. The same thing is true of our prayers. We say, "Let us unite in prayer," and the phrase means more than we sometimes think when we use it. Our prayers unite us both in the letter and in the spirit. We are one when we sing and we are one when we pray. We were present in a convention in which the largest number of theological students from the largest number of theological schools ever assembled together on the American continent up to that time were in a series of devotional sessions. We listened as those men prayed and we tried to distinguish the various schools of theological training and thought which they represented in the formulation of their petitions. The attempt was an absolute failure in every respect. They were all just such prayers as we had been accustomed to hear all our life in our own denomination. We came away from that convention with the conviction renewed within us that in their devotions all Christians are very much alike. Our unity of spirit is manifest in our praying and our singing and wher-

ever the Spirit is manifest we realize that we are one in our lives.

6. **In Saintly Lives.** There are mystics in all of the churches. They are the salt of the earth and the light of the world in all the denominations. They believe in the direct and immediate inspiration of the Spirit in their own hearts and lives. They find their final authority not in a book or an institution, not in tradition and prescription, but in the voice of God in their own souls. They listen to hear the Spirit speak. They purify themselves even as he is pure, in order that the Divine Presence may be with them and abide in them and guide them in all their ways. The hope of all progress lies with them. The assurance of organic union is in their hands.

There are saints in all the churches. There are men and women whose affections are set on things above, not on things on the earth, men and women who are ceaselessly striving to be more like the Master, pure in motive, clean in life, strangely and supernaturally successful in living, unselfish and unworldly, in the midst of all the selfishness and worldliness of their surroundings. They are in all the churches. We know them by their stanch adherence to the right at all costs, by the love manifest in all their actions, by the aura of

sanctity they carry with them wherever they go. They may have different theologies but they have the same reverence for God. They may have different forms of worship but they have the same adoration and devotion.

The mystics and saints of all the churches and of all the lands are akin. They may be divided by national differences, they may be divided by divergencies of creed, they may be divided now by ecclesiastical rivalries, yet, as Dale of Birmingham has said, "they are strangely alike. Voice answers to voice across the centuries which separate them; they tell in different tongues of the same wonderful discovery of a divine kingdom; they translate every man for himself into his own life the same divine law. We of obscurer rank and narrower powers read their lives, and we know that we and they are akin; we listen to their words, and are thrilled by the accent of home. Their songs are on our lips; they seem to have been written for us by men who knew the secret we wanted to utter better than we knew it ourselves. Their confessions of sin are a fuller expression of our own sorrow and trouble than we ourselves had ever been able to make. Their life is our life. They and we are brethren. We and they belong to a new race. A new type of character has been cre-

ated. Christ lives in all of those whose life is rooted in him."

We recognize each other as men with the same ideals and the same fruit of the Spirit; and whether we are called Greek or Roman, Established or Nonconformist, Baptist, Methodist, or Presbyterian we see in each other a family likeness, unless we are so blinded by prejudice as to be unwilling to see any goodness outside our own particular fold. Emerson said that when Lyman Beecher got to heaven and found Channing there, he would say, "Why, Channing, are you here?" and Channing would answer, "Of course; but, Beecher, how did you get in?" Both of those men had the fruit of the Spirit in their lives. Both of them were laboring to build up the kingdom of God. They were spiritual brothers; but, possibly, Lyman Beecher at least would have disowned the relationship.

We live in happier days; and we will rejoice in the fruit of the Spirit wherever it is found and we will claim every man as our brother who is working for the kingdom of God. We believe in the same Christ; we are followers of the same Lord; we are disciples of the same Master; we all are saved by grace; we all share in the Christian life; we all are going to the same heaven.

As a modern preacher has put it, "Let narrow dogmatists say what they will, but 'the meek, the just, the pious, the devout are all of one religion,' though here they do not recognize each other over the thorny hedges of opinions, and across the tottering walls of sects and churches, daubed with the untempered mortar of human pride.

"But there in heaven, the shaven and sandaled Inquisitor mayhap shall weep tears of remorse as he folds in his arms the holier brother whom here he tortured. There Luther shall be one with Zwingli, though on some mere opinion about the sacrament he said that they were not of the same spirit. There Arminius and Calvin shall agree together very well. There Channing is one with Augustine, and George Fox sees eye to eye with Pascal. There Pusey and Maurice may sit side by side, though one said to the other, 'We do not worship the same God.' For God looks on us with larger, other eyes than ours. He is not the leader of a sect, or the fugle-man of a party. He estimates us not by our achievement of orthodoxy, but by our struggle for goodness.

"To him who believes in Christ and in his righteousness and in a God of light and love, difference or agreement on this petty point, or that petty point, of ritual or doctrine are

as trifles—the mere provincialism of ignorance and pride. Every bigot in exact proportion to his feebleness and ignorance revels in the exacerbation of differences; but just in proportion as a man loves God, and is like God, does he emerge into an upper air, where the divisions between churches do not run, and the noise of controversy cannot penetrate."

Those who live in this upper air are of one spirit even here, and what is the use of waiting until we get to heaven to find it out and to realize it in our conduct toward each other? The unity of the spirit is more fundamental than any minor distinctions of dogma. It was this unity for which Jesus prayed and which has been granted in answer to his prayer. This unity has been manifest through the ages; and we pray that it may become more manifest in our age than in any which has preceded it.

We claim all the saints as our brethren. The martyrs and missionaries of the ages belong to us. We sympathize with their sufferings and we rejoice in their victories. The Franciscans in the fervor of their first devotion to poverty and gospel preaching, the scholars of Port Royal, the heroic Huguenots and the persecuted Pilgrims and Puritans, the Moravians and the Methodists—all of them are ours, members of the Body to which we

belong, of like spirit and love. We claim kinship with them all; and we pray only that we may be worthy of fellowship in such company both here and in heaven.

It is true that no denomination has any monopoly upon privileges which affect Christian character. Love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control, whatsoever things are honorable, just, pure, lovely, and of good report, are absolutely undenominational. They belong to us all. They are just as typical of one as of another. In all our churches they flourish alike. We rejoice in that fact and we rejoice in the fellowship of all the saints in whatever church they may chance to be.

PART FOUR: CONSUMMATION

CONSUMMATION

1. The Ideal. We pray for organic unity among the churches as soon as that may be possible, believing that it will tend to the greater glory of God. We pray for unbroken fraternal union among all of the churches as long as their separate existence may last. We pray for practical co-operation in all Christian work; and in this common work to a common end we hope to realize that ideal of James Martineau, in a unity "more deep-seated and affectionate than that of mere opinion; a unity of allegiance to one Father, and toil for one brotherhood, and reverence for one law of duty, and aspiration for one home in heaven; the universal church of good and faithful souls, adorning God's providence with varieties of thought, and strengthening it by consentaneousness of love."

The Bishop of Exeter in England invited the Nonconformist ministers of Devonshire to a meeting in his episcopal palace, and he made to them there a very fine statement of Christian unity in these words: "We do not meet to-day to express conformity in church discipline, for therein we differ in many

things, but we do meet to evidence our confraternity in the fundamental verities of the everlasting gospel, for therein we are one and shall be one forever. Not conformity to-day, but confraternity is our watchword. Wherein we differ, we desire, as the inspired apostle teaches us, with all lowliness and meekness and longsuffering to forbear one another in love, and wherein we are one we are endeavoring ourselves to-day to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace; for we know there is one body and one Spirit, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in us all. And we recognize in each other, as the apostle goes on to say, that there is grace given to each one according to the gift of Christ."

A similar gathering was held at Kikuyu, a flourishing missionary station in East Africa. After fellowship in discussion of their mutual problems and prayer for mutual guidance and grace, all the denominations represented in that gathering celebrated a communion service together, the Church of England Bishop of Uganda among the rest. That aroused the holy ire of the Bishop of Zanzibar. He immediately brought charges against his brother bishop and the famous case of Z

versus U, Zanzibar against Uganda, began before the Archbishop of Canterbury. There was great excitement throughout the Church of England over the question as to whether the good Bishop of Uganda had not transcended his authority or at least betrayed his authority by recognizing the orders of other ministers, not episcopally ordained, and fellowshiping with them as equals in the celebration of the sacramental service. The Church of England bade fair to be split asunder on the issue; but then the Great War came along and more important affairs had to be attended to and the Kikuyu incident seems to have been forgotten.

As long as the recognition of exclusive Orders is made a prerequisite to fellowship and communion with each other in the Lord's Supper all hope of organic union is at an end. Such union will not be brought about by the absorption of all the other churches by any one of the existing churches. It will come in the concord of the Spirit and not by conquest in debate. It will be maintained not by unconditional surrender to any aggressive authority but by mutual yielding to the persuasions of love and continuous loyalty to the leading of the Spirit of God. Until the attainment of this ideal we must be content with

the invisible unity of the spirit in which the church now is one. It is possible to maintain that unity with the present number and variety of denominations and sects; and just because that is possible now we will continue to pray and to hope for the time to come when the same oneness can be visibly maintained in the organic unity of Christendom.

2. **Variety in Harmony.** It is possible to have variety with harmony in the united church. Unity does not mean uniformity. When the Church of Christ becomes one Universal Church it will have within it all classes and colors and races and temperaments with all their diversified opinions and tastes. That will be inevitable in a truly Catholic Church. The bond of its union will be found not in any of these things in which men necessarily do and must forever differ but in a common principle of life, a common Spirit and Lord and faith and baptism, a common God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all.

3. **The Motto.** Its motto for all time will be that old motto of Rupertus Meldenius: *In necessariis unitas, in non-necessariis libertas, in utrisque caritas.* Such a church would be free outwardly, not subservient to any party or class or nation, and it would be free in-

wardly, being guided by the Spirit alone and exercising all liberty of reverent worship and godly discipline, and it would speak with one voice in all the fundamentals of its faith and would make its influence felt for good over all the earth.

4. A Dream? Such a church would realize the dream expressed in Whittier's verse,

"In time to be
Shall holier altars rise to Thee—
The church our broad humanity.

"A sweeter song shall then be heard—
The music of the world's accord,
Confessing Christ, the inward Word.

"That song shall swell from shore to shore,
One hope, one faith, one love restore
The seamless robe that Jesus wore."

Is it only a dream? No, it is a part of our faith. Jesus prayed that his church might be one, and it will be one in heaven; and we pray that the will of God may be done upon the earth even as it is done in heaven, and we have faith to believe that that prayer sometime will be answered.

"Dreamer of dreams! we take the taunt with gladness,
Knowing that God, beyond the years we see,
Has wrought the dream that counts with you for madness
Into the texture of the world to be."

5. **America?** Suppose we should begin this work in America. We have representatives of all the churches here and all of the American churches have grown up without any connection with the state, free, independent, democratic in their government. In our American environment all these churches are freer from the traditions and the prejudices of the past than the churches in the older countries are apt to be. We are accustomed to new things here in America and we are familiar with great enterprises. We have shaken off the timidity of some of the older peoples and we are ready to better our conditions in any way. We have great resources. Have we the great faith and love necessary to make this great adventure in good will and Christian brotherhood?

6. **Anglican Church?** What church ought to take the initiative in this matter? What church is most likely to carry the enterprise through to success? Who can tell? Who can prophesy how God will bring this great consummation to its realization at last? Unexpected agents may be raised up at any time. New and unsuspected developments may take place at any moment. Church history is full of great surprises. Spirit-filled individuals and Spirit-filled churches can work miracles,

can accomplish the impossible. No one can undertake to say how God will effect his ends. He may choose the foolish things of this world to confound the wise, and the weak things of this world to confound the things which are mighty and the things which are not to bring to naught the things which are.

As far as we can see, however, the Anglican Church is in the best position at present to begin the movement with some reasonable hope of success. De Maistre, a Roman Catholic layman in France, once said, "If ever there should be a movement toward reunion among the Christian bodies, it seems likely that the Church of England should be the one to give it impulse . . . The English Church, which touches us with the one hand, touches with the other those with whom we have no point of contact. She is like one of those chemical re-agents which unite elements incapable, in their own nature, of reunion." He meant by that, that the Anglican Church stood nearer to the Roman Catholic and the Greek Orthodox churches than any other of the Protestant bodies does; and he was right, of course, in that conclusion.

The Anglican Church is a Protestant church, but it claims to be in the line of apostolic succession and to be a Catholic church,

just as much as the Roman Catholic and the Greek Orthodox churches do. It is bound to them by many ties of common faith and tradition. On the other hand, it is bound to the other Protestant churches by many racial, historical, and spiritual affinities. It is not a compromise church. It has as noble a history as any other. It is no nondescript combination of opposites. Its outline is as well defined as that of any other church. Yet it has High-churchmen and Low-churchmen equally at home and with equal rights within its borders. It is the one great church in the world at present in which those who represent the Catholic position and those who represent the Protestant position live and work in organic union. It is the living illustration of the truth that it is not impossible for these two principles, the Catholic and the Protestant, to proceed on their way toward the millennium in inclusive and consistent peace and fellowship together. *What the Church of England actually does to-day the united Church of Christendom can do to-morrow.*

On the other hand, the Anglican Church is a purely national church. It belongs exclusively to the Anglo-Saxon race. It is not as catholic in its organization as the Roman and the Greek churches are, and it has not the ex-

tended membership of the Lutheran and the Presbyterian and the Methodist communions. No one can prophesy which of the present church bodies will have the honor of leading in the great movement toward unity, and what the course of that movement will be. World-wide Methodism far outnumbers the Anglican Church in its membership, while it is more nearly allied to the Anglican Church than any other of the dissenting churches. If world-wide Methodism would maintain the catholic spirit of its founder, John Wesley, its numbers and its influence around the globe might well make it the protagonist in the world-wide movement for Christian unity.

7. **Progress.** It ought not to be difficult for the Anglican Church and the Wesleyan Church to be united. Negotiations have been started, looking toward that end. We may live to see that union accomplished. Then the Wesleyan Church could serve as a good mediator between the Anglican Church and the other non-Conformist bodies. The Wesleyans could unite with them organically, even as it has in the Free Church Council federatively. A united Protestantism could foster the present cordial relations existing between the Anglican Church and the Greek Orthodox Church until their present unofficial inter-

communion had ripened into official recognition and organic union.

Then, when the Anglican and the Greek Orthodox and the Protestant churches are one, representing the whole tradition of Christianity from the beginning until now and incarnating the spirit of Jesus and manifesting the power of the gospel of God, the Roman Catholics last of all in some far future day may be attracted by the ideal of Christian unity and may see that papal despotism is not necessary to it, and the saints among them will long for fellowship with all their brethren in the Christian faith, and bit by bit or province by province or nation by nation or all at once the final melting of all hearts in Christian love and the breaking down of all barriers between the denominations will take place and we will have the manifestation to the world of the unity of the Body of Christ for which the Master prayed.

Logically it would seem necessary for Protestants to acknowledge the technical irregularities of the Reformation period and for the Roman Catholics to renounce their persecutions and unjust discipline in those days and for all to repent of the bitterness of spirit and the unloving conduct of that time; but in the long last logic may give way to love and "a

warmth within the breast" may melt "the freezing reason's colder part" and sad and bad history may be forgotten in the realization of present Christian brotherhood and the possibility of future and eternal peace.

Is this vision never to be realized? Robert Speer, the present Moderator of the Presbyterian Church, thinks it will be realized in the next one hundred years. Harnack says it may be, if we proceed upon five principles: 1. All politics must be eliminated. 2. All parties must try to be just to each other. 3. All useless controversies must be avoided and a fair and honest method of calm discussion be instituted. 4. Each church must try to appreciate the religious and spiritual life of the other churches. 5. A higher unity and a further truth than we have yet known must be held as the final ideal. It was Lacordaire who nobly said, "I care not to convince my opponents of error, I aspire to be united with them in a higher truth." This probably represents Harnack's thought at this point. These things would seem to be far from impossible among Christians. Along these lines may we not approach nearer and nearer to each other with each generation?

8. Realization. As the Lambeth appeal has said, "The vision which rises before us is that

of a church, genuinely catholic, loyal to all truth, and gathering into its fellowship 'all who profess and call themselves Christians,' within whose visible unity all the treasures of faith and order, bequeathed as a heritage by the past to the present, shall be possessed in common, and made serviceable to the whole Body of Christ." It is the vision of the final answer to our Master's prayer that his church might be one and to the realization of that vision and prayer we pledge our utmost endeavor, singing with John Mason Neale:

"O sweet rainbow, yearned for long and dearly,
That one day One Only Church shall span,
Dim, and broken and incipient merely,
But not less God's Covenant with man!
We shall never see thy perfect beauty:
We shall never trace thy sevenfold form:
Others' be the triumph: ours the duty:
Others' be the sunshine: ours the storm.
Show us, Lord, thy work; our sons thy glory:
Yet of us, though that be all we ask,
May be said, perchance, in future story,
These were men that then did Union's task."

We do its task by clearing our own hearts of all prejudice and our own lives of all sin. The union we seek is a Christian union. Our unity of organization must rest on a Christian foundation. The church is to be not only one, but one in Christ, one in holiness, a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any

such thing, holy and without blemish in the sight of the Lord.[4] Then when the church is one as Jesus and the Father were one the Master's prayer will be answered, and the world will believe that he was sent for the world's salvation.[5] The sanctity of the church will be manifested in the unity of the church and the sanctity and unity of the church will result in the world's conversion.

The highway of holiness is a high way. We must climb to reach it. It will be attained only in earnest endeavor. Those who follow Paul from peak to peak into the heights of Christian love, as he has presented them in the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians, will find that they have come to the heights of Christian unity. Below there were barriers and divisions, clouds and fogs. At the summit there is the sun.

All paths converge as we climb into the heights. By many ways the pilgrims arrive; but they come together at last at the top. They have been one in aspiration and they are one in attainment. They find that

> ". . . the toppling crags of Duty scaled
> Are close upon the shining table-lands
> To which our God himself is moon and sun."

[4] Eph. 5. 27.
[5] John 17. 21.

Shortly before his death Cardinal Mercier, the patriot of Belgium during the Great War, wrote to the Archbishop of Canterbury, with whom he had been laboring in this cause of Christian union, "We may be unable to achieve it, but it is within our power, and consequently within our duty, to prepare it and pave the way for it." All the children of God will be at one in this statement of their faith and endeavor.

They will believe that it is not "impossible to arrive at some form of organization which will combine liberty and unity, conserving the values in our differences and making possible the gains of united life and service." They will be inclined to believe that, "if the union of Christendom is not possible, then either Christianity is not of God, or all Christian communions are on a false basis." They will be ready to say, "If this vision tarry, even now and until it is fully come, will we live in the spirit and hope of its accomplishment."

So living they will live in the unclouded presence and in close communion with him they will find themselves at peace with all of his children. Nearer him they will be nearer them. At one with him they will be at one with them. In the unity of his spirit organic unity will be attained. Then on the "shining

table-lands" the Holy Catholic Church of our Christ will say and sing:

"Touched by the loadstone of thy love,
Let all our hearts agree,
And ever toward each other move,
And ever move toward thee."

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